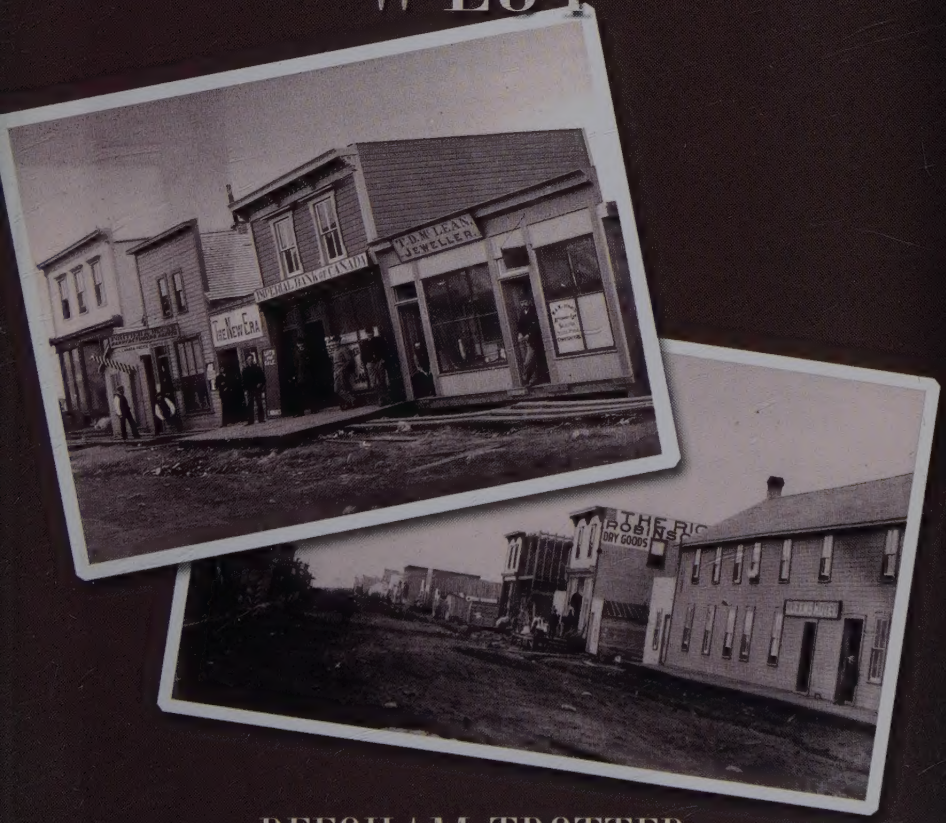
A HORSEMAN AND THE WEST



BEECHAM TROTTER

A Horseman and the West

by

Beecham Trotter

With Arthur Hawkes Assisting

Originally published 1925

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In admiration of the Men and Women
Pioneers who made the West

Preface

It is very easy to find history books written by academics who do not have first-hand knowledge of the times and places of which they write. Such histories are often dry and factual, revealing little of the people and the flavour of the times. It is another thing altogether to read a book by an individual who lived in the places and times of which he or she writes. These individuals, perhaps unwittingly, breathe life into their subject matter.

So it is with Beecham Trotter's "A Horseman and the West." This author recounts his personal experiences and shares his take on events that have shaped the Canadian Prairies. The personal anecdotes and observations in this work highlight milestones of history in a way that a compilation of names, places and dates simply cannot.

Although this book is not focused solely upon Brandon, it does shed some light on its development, on the practices of the day and on the people who gave birth to the city. As it is Brandon's 125th anniversary, this particular milestone provides the opportunity to present Trotter's insights to a new generation of Brandon and area residents.

"A Horseman and the West" was first published in 1925, when Mr. Trotter was sixty-five years old. It was presented in a style that is somewhat different than this particular edition, in which every page was headed by a quaint subtitle, a custom of the day which was impossible to reproduce for this project. However, in order to retain the author's voice, the entire text of his book is presented unedited: His original spelling, phrasing and punctuation

remain intact. This preface is the only modification to the body of this work.

Mr. Trotter passed away in Brandon on March 5, 1934, but despite this, his voice carries clearly across the decades, recalling an era that most of today's readers can barely fathom. Anyone who has ever called the Canadian Prairies home or has even only traveled across the vast plains should take a moment to marvel over those individuals who endured incredible hardships, and to acknowledge their labours upon which are built the comforts and conveniences enjoyed today.

T. KEITH EDMUNDS
Publisher, Rosser Avenue Press
Brandon, February 25, 2007.

Explanatory

It might be better to tell the public why you didn't put out a book than to explain why you did. For a long time quite a few people in and around Brandon have been expecting a book like this. Before the war it became known that I was gathering material. If the book had not appeared it would have been necessary to explain to some why it hadn't. To others it may be self-defensive to tell why it has.

During many years, when some old-timer would relate an experience, the idea would occur and recur: -- "One of these days that old chap will be gone, and his story will be lost to posterity. Posterity ought to know what the pioneers were up against when they began to make a country for their descendants. Somebody ought to see that the early days won't be dumb to those who come after them."

That might be explanation enough of "A Horseman and the West," only that one doesn't want to put all the responsibility for this on posterity. I really wanted to do something that, even in these days, we appreciate the labors of others into which we have entered. The only way to do it seemed to be by way of print – and here's the print; which couldn't have been done by Beecham Trotter, who has been a horse dealer, and does not profess to be an author.

When I got a lot of matter together, and looked it over, it was plain that at a one horse job I would be stuck in my own track. I found help in an old western pioneer who, after going through the homesteading mill near Broadview, worked on Brandon farms in 1887 and 1888. Mr. Hawkes has therefore fully entered into the spirit of this rather

unusual adventure. I think there's too much Trotter in this book. He say's there isn't; and that he will take the blame if any reader agrees with me.

This doesn't pretend to be a history. I trust it isn't dry enough, as certainly it isn't long enough, for that. It would have been impossible to reproduce a sort of directory of the pioneers in town or out. This book cannot fairly be judged by the difference between those who are in it and those who are not. We haven't aimed to hand out justice, but to tell a human character story, with strict adherence to known facts.

Some people are mentioned here because they were good; and some because they were not quite so good. The good people who ought to be in and are not may have escaped something. A few others may have been luckier than they know. If every reader does not see that Brandon city and country are founded on the character and courage of as fine a people as have created any community in the world, the fault is in the execution, and not in the intention of the task. What is true of Brandonian life is true of all Western Canada, the only fault of whose people is that they don't know how greatly they have wrought.

BEECHAM TROTTER
Brandon, November 4th, 1925.

Supplementary

When Mr. Trotter first wrote suggesting that what had been done for Mr. Hanna, first President of the Canadian National Railways, in "Trains of Recollection," might be applied to his Brandoniana, he said inquiries about him might be made of any preacher or bank manager in Brandon. When it appeared there was a horse dealer in the world who gave every minister of the gospel in his home city as a reference, it was clear that we were in for no ordinary time.

Everything here that is worth reading is Mr. Trotter's. Without asking his leave, one testifies with a great deal of pleasure that he has all along realized that he was rendering a service to the community more than he was looking for the customary results of publishing a successful book.

ARTHUR HAWKES
Toronto, November 7th, 1925.
A Horseman and the West

Chapter I
THE ONTARIO BACKGROUND

When George Brown, western farm pioneer and son of eastern pioneers, was lieutenant-governor of Saskatchewan, a distinguished English visitor expressed to him a deep fear of the effect on Britannic institutions, of the foreign invasion of Saskatchewan. For answer, the governor shewed him the Legislature then in session, and gave him a who's who of the members. They were practically all eastern Canadians and Britishers.

The Government, he said, had well and truly laid the foundations of a progressive province. He mentioned such works as the Saskatchewan University; the Government-directed telephone system, and the remarkably successful co-operative elevator system, which, with governmental backing was proving the greatest success in the economics of organized agriculture so far seen in the world – and he pointed out that the premier and his most forceful colleagues – Scott, Calder, Motherwell – were all Ontario men.

Ontario may not be as great, or as far in the forefront of the confederation as Ontario believes. But she is still what she long ago became accustomed to calling herself, the banner province. When Manitoba's isolation ended, and the modern phase of land settlement began, it was mainly from Ontario that the migrating streams flowed. At least until the marvelously fertile Dauphin country was given railway service, farming Manitoba was a new Ontario – or rather old Ontario in a new guise. Indeed, the settlement along the Canadian Pacific main line during the eighteen eighties

was so largely Ontarion that, to this day, the Conservative party looks to that strip of country for its chief strength in Saskatchewan, because the John A. Macdonald tradition and the Orange force remain, as they cannot exist among populations to who Ontario is chiefly a name.

This, too, is worth remembering – that the Ontario from which so many of the western pioneers came was a different Ontario, in aspect and experience, from the Ontario which fears it is reeling in to the pit because it has begun openly to consume four point four beer. If the West scarcely knows the best of its own background; the East, one sometimes thinks, is falling into a similar, but less excusable forgetfulness. Lately, in Ontario, one found that what he could tell of his own life in his native province, was almost as strange as if it were told to Scandanavians at Red Deer. Soon there won't be a man left in Huron or Bruce who can say that his cleared all his farm; and soon there will be nobody who knew anybody who could make so wonderful an assertion.

My father, William Trotter, came with his parents from county Leitrim, Ireland during the period of rather intensive immigration to Canada which culminated about 1835, when over a hundred shiploads of immigrants landed at Quebec. After a good deal of searching for a location, the Trotters settled in the township of Pittsburg, about nine miles east of Kingston.

The comparatively slow growth of Kingston, once the capital of Canada, has been attributed to "the sterility of the surrounding country." That may be true, in a way, through the great success of dairying in Frontenac county tells another story. Many a shrewd landseeker in a new country has found himself on comparatively poor soil, merely because he was new in a new country; and had no training in testing the productive qualities of partially hidden land.

At the time the whole country was covered with forest. Eastern Ontario has its share of outcropping rocks. In some localities, farther back from the St. Lawrence, the soil, rather than the rocks, outcrops. But in Pittsburg the land is very fertile. When the Trotters went in, carrying everything on their backs, painfully following a blazed trail, which later became a track, and then a road by the use of the never absent axe, they had visions of making fertility out of the forest. Their visions came true, because their right hands were skilful and persistent in warfare against maple and pine.

My father went through all the experiences of clearing space for a log shanty, felling trees for room in which to raise a few potatoes; growing a little grain between the stumps; existing with almost none of the twentieth century comforts of a home; seldom seeing the sun except at mid-day through the tall tree tops; and carrying an axe or a gun – or both – as the companion of almost every venture away from his open hearth.

The one thing, within easy reach, which the prairie pioneer longed for was wood. The chief thing the eastern pioneer had to get rid of was wood. There was so much of it that for years he had no road that a wheeled vehicle could easily travel. He carried everything in and out on his back, even after he had ceased to pound wheat to flour in a hollowed oak stump, and had it ground at the mill. Then, when he had reached the horse-owning stage, he did all his business on horseback.

Even so, with no possibility of the land yielding for many years anything like the return in crops that the first season can bring to a prairie homesteader, the land bought by my father from the Government, cost four dollars an acre. The principles on which forest locations were chosen for farms were various – largely because the principal job,

at least for many seasons, was to destroy the timber. Some settlers selected hilly places because it was easier to roll logs downhill to be burnt in piles than it was to pile them on level ground. Others preferred the low lying ground because they saw that unaided fertility there would no longer abide.

It seemed impossible that, in Canada, shortage of timber would ever be spoken of. The chief income of the early years of clearing a bush farm was from potash. Ashes were worth more than the wood from which they were made. Never was there such a triumph of waste over wisdom, if the urgency for bread be forgotten. Burning the timber impoverished the soil on which the fire was kindled. But what were the pioneers to do? They must live. They must grow their own food, and a surplus, as soon as possible.

They could not grow enough for themselves, plus enough with which to buy what they could not grow – tea; salt; all the manufactured goods except, perhaps, woolen cloth which they could only make when they kept sheep and could acquire spinning wheels and looms. So they had to get money as best they could, and potash was one of their commercial commodities – the meager remains of noble trees, which reared their crest sixty feet toward the heavens.

Our home was between the Rideau Canal and the St. Lawrence. The canal is one of those memorials of an age so close to the American war of independence and the war of 1812-14 that it was regarded as vital to colonial safety to provide for military transport by water through country which, looking back, anybody can see was never in the slightest danger of needing anything of the kind. The cost of this unnecessary "military" canal, I suppose, is included in the four hundred million dollars, which, it used to be said, Canada owed the Motherland for defence. The region

was as picturesque as any in Canada. It was settled, surely, by as fine a people as any new country ever received.

Perhaps, in those days, people who came from the same countries, inter-marrried more than they now do, when more cosmopolitan associations abound. At a rather discouraging time, my father, being Irish, married an Irish girl who was born at Point Levis, Quebec. His log house and his best suit were burnt just before the wedding; but that made no difference to the event. Mother was Sarah Colclough, scion of a famous family, which owned the Tintern Abbey estate of ten thousand acres, in Wexford county. The abbey was named after Tintern Abbey in Monmouthshire. It was founded in the thirteenth century by monks from the other Tintern. The Cloclough baronetcy was held by several Caesars, the most interesting being one in the mid-eighteenth century, who was extremely popular, as lavish spenders usually are.

The learned in such matters aver that the title lapsed through the non-payment of fees due to the college of heralds. This is not mentioned with the idea of suggesting that any Trotter hereabouts is a missing baronet. Mother's branch of her family being more concerned with title to Canadian land than with any European dignity; and the rest of us having had to scratch for every title to property we ever obtained; the decorative side of our ancestry has never troubled us. Still, after the manner of the spinster in the comedy who has said she once received a masculine kiss – "Some people seem to doubt it; but I like to talk about it" she used to say – this indulgence may be allowed even to one who doesn't think much of titles that are nothing but.

What is of more value is that mother was one of those pioneer women of Canada to whom sufficient tribute has not been, and never can be paid. Look at the conditions in which they brought forth and reared their children. They

could not have anything better than log cabins for residence, the spaces between logs being stuffed with moss, through which the snow often drifted. Frequently they had to be alone. Husbands who were not very well off sometimes went away to work for those who could afford to employ labor. In cold weather the open fire – there were no efficient stoves, then – had to be continually replenished. Even in the summer it must not be allowed utterly to die; for the age of matches was still in the future; tinder boxes and flint were not in every home; the job of starting a fire by the friction of dry sticks was tedious indeed, and to walk miles to borrow a live coal that had to be kept alive during the return journey was a grievous affliction.

Many Ontario babies were rocked in maple sap troughs, which made useful, if not ornamental cradles. While with one foot she rocked, with the other mother would spin yarn against the chance of getting it woven. It was a wonderful advance when the hooks in the fireplace gave way to the barrel-shaped oven above the new stoves, in which two loaves could be baked. A wonderful domestic event happened when a ticking clock dismissed the mark on the floor which, when the sun-cast shadow reached it, proclaimed high noon, and the men were called from the fields. The replacing of candles by a petroleum lamp was another memorable stage in our advance to luxury; of a piece with the ability to go from room to room by the aid of a lighted match.

As these adjuncts of civilization increased, some of the characteristics of our parents' early days became more and more reminiscential. Her children would hear from mother how, in fall or spring she was as likely as not to hear Bruin prowling around the yard in search of food. It was not very singular for a bear's face to be seen at the little four-paned window which was all the day-time illumination

that many a landowner's home could afford. The howling of wolves was quite common in winter. On cold nights there was always the likelihood of Jack Frost disturbing the stillness of the wilderness by cracking his artillery within the splitting trees.

And, of course, in those days the woman did all sorts of chores outside the home. When there were cows, far too often she had to milk them. Being a mother herself, it seemed to men of the epoch that she was the most natural person to look after bovine progeny. A woman's patience, to some, appeared to be divinely appointed for the adventure of teaching a calf to empty a pail of milk. In this tuition there are calves and calves, just as there are scholars and scholars in other schools. Some quickly learn to suck without a teat. Some long refuse anything but mother's way. Those who have not taught to such the art of withdrawing milk from a bucket can never know what patience's perfect work truly is.

The calf is a wonderful exemplar of the attachment to time-honored orthodox methods which distinguishes other spheres of life. It was in connection with this interesting, but not momentous aspect of agriculture that one obtained an insight into the easement of theological precision which has come to many of the most devout among the elect women in out time. Many years ago a friend told me a story that reflected the theological precision, and the next day another furnished an example of this easement.

As to theological precision: Two maiden aunts were discussing the too modern state of the church. Said one: "My dear; how do you feel about this new doctrine they are beginning to preach – that there is no eternal punishment? Can it possibly be true that it is not as we have been taught – that if we die in our sins we shall be tormented for ever in a lake of fire?"

"Well, Pheobe," came the response; after considerable consideration; "I don't know; but we must hope it isn't true; and if it is, we must try to hush it up."

As to theological easement: One of the devoutest of all our Brandon friends, discussing pioneer conditions, regretted that there isn't as much Sunday observance – what she called "the means" – as there used to be when she and I were young. Broadly, we were in agreement; but I ventured the remark that the old folks were apt to be rather too rigid and narrow in their conceptions of Divine Goodness.

"Suppose" I said to my most Christian friend "one of our mothers, having slaved and saved, so as to get a piece of home-made carpet, a churn, a shop-turned butter bowl, a ladle and a few candle moulds, and had at last managed to buy one single dress of rather a gay material. And suppose on a Sunday, being in a hurry, and for the first time in her life careless towards her costliest attire, she decides to give the calf its supper before she goes to church; and the calf rushes at the pail, and upsets the whole lot upon the priceless dress. Suppose the lady loses her temper and damns the calf to the limit of time and the extremity of woe. Do you think that, if she did not repent that lapse into temper, she would be damned for ever and ever?"

Our friend took another sip of tea, looked at me almost as a coquette might and said "Well, it would be a damn shame if she did."

Those early times were indeed hard. Reading was mighty scarce, so that there was small chance for the intellect to make up what the stomach missed, even though they read their Bibles by the light of the fire in the hearth. Those who had come from abroad and thought wistfully of the past, often had no money for postage, even if they had the paper on which to write. It cost from five to six

shillings to send a letter home.

Money was almost as scarce as some communist ideals of society might like to have it now. It had more value, no doubt, than visibility. One knew that whiskey could be bought for twenty-five cents a gallon, in eastern Ontario. But I find in a Huron atlas of 1875 that a bushel of wheat was worth twenty-five cents; and two gallons of whiskey could be got for a bushel of wheat. A yard of unbleached cotton was worth two bushels of wheat, or four gallons of whisky. On that basis, if cotton today were bringing as much whiskey it would be worth almost its weight in gold.

The labor that went into a few bushels of wheat was prodigious. Some pines were so big that the farmer hadn't the power to move them after he felled them. So he had to break his ground around the stem as well as around the stump. Nothing like the harrow of modern days was possible to him. He covered his hand-sown seeds by dragging the crotch of a tree between the stumps. When there was no room for a horse to haul a green and supple crotch between the stumps he bedded his seeds with a hoe.

And yet pioneers such as these, having nothing to do but work; and not worrying about garages or movies, made remarkable progress. The blazed trail became a road, with its corduroy of poles in the swampy places. The potato patch snuggling against a rampart of tall timber, gave place to a lawn, a big kitchen garden, and a perennial border. Better than the creek was the well with its old oaken bucket and pole. The log house usually became a granary, or wagon shed, because it was replaced by a more spacious, far costlier residence.

My mother's health failed just after I was born and we had an Irish housekeeper before our larger house was undertaken. To that girl, and my father's ambition for a

modern home I owe salvation from something which might have become a curse indeed. Possibly as a reaction from a piety which savored of the Westminster Confession, I very early developed an aptitude for profanity which no doubt seemed enjoyable then, but is horrible now.

My uncle, Thomas Rea, built most of the churches and stone houses in Pittsburg township, including ours. One day while uncle and his masons were at dinner at our place, a poorly-dressed man appeared, carrying a bag. I asked Jane who he was. She said he was the devil, and his bag was to put me in for swearing, for the time had come, of which she had frequently spoken, to give me away.

Faith in her word, fear for myself, and the instinct for self-preservation drove me under the table next my uncle. I saw Jane giving the devil his dinner, as he sat just inside the door. Between the men's and the table's legs I watched him and the bag which, it seemed, was ready to gape for me. As one diner after another left the table I was surer than ever that my awful fate was at hand, and averted my gaze from the terrible prospect. I was so scared that I didn't see the devil depart; and when at last I realised he had left the house, and ventured outside, and learned that he was off the place, I was cured of blasphemy.

Chapter II
OF SCHOOLING AND SUCH

Though Jane's medicine did me good, it has been a rule ever since I grew up, not to frighten children with threats of bogies, policemen and other walking Days of Judgement; and not to tell them fairy tales when a little wholesome truth is infinitely better. The first question I remember asking was "Where did I come from?" – a question as old as Eden. They told me I was found in a hollow log, out in the bush.

"Well," I said to myself, "it was a cruel trick to leave me in a place like that."

What do people on the plains, where there are neither logs nor gooseberry bushes, tell their inquisitive children about their origin?

Surely I was a quite ordinary child; for never has any form of precocity been attributed to me. But how few of us have tried to fathom, forestall, or fructify the ordinary child's unfolding mind? The race is in its infancy as a teacher of infant minds. A friend tells me his first recorded question was asked when he discovered that his cot was wider than the door.

"How did you get this cot through the door?" he asked.

Instead of being told the truth he was given an evasion. Later, he recalls, he made his first discovery in the field of pure reason – and it might have some lesson for speculators who think they know nearly all, when they surmise only a little. He perceived that when the trees waved their

branches the wind was very strong. He therefore argued to himself that if all the trees were cut down there would be no storms. There are lots of men like that, but this child grew, and is growing, after forty years of self dependence.

A strange idea took possession of my wayward little mind, with regard to the propensity for talking like some of the men. I wished very hard and very often to be turned into a girl so that I wouldn't swear. It seemed that girls didn't swear because they couldn't – as to which one has since learned that the female of the species can be as lurid as the male – and very seldom is; for which divine Mercy be praised.

Nothing of this discovery about the equal capacity of the sexes was made at home, school or any other place in Pittsburg township where out own sort of people congregated. We were like pioneer farm children over most of this continent, no doubt. We did as much work as the frugality, forbearance, or forcefulness of our parents decreed. Father was a very neighborly man – and his sons, on the whole, one can say, have fairly followed his example. He kept everything in good shape; was a glad and free lender of tools and machinery, like the fanning mill.

There was one appliance that did not circulate – the grindstone, which, as grindstones then were, was big and wide. The neighbors came with something to grind; but usually with nobody to turn the stone. Half the times they looked to me to be their assistant. Very early in life, therefore, I became a good judge of the length of a scythe; and could guess how hard a big man would press its blade upon that pesky stone.

The grindstone handle was of wood, with no roller on it; so that the boy had to push and pull with all his might; and still keep his hands loose enough so as not to blister

them in the first five minutes. The grindstone turner was a philanthropist; a public servant; a doer of good, whose noble deeds were never sung until now.

It must not be supposed, though, that a farm boy's impressions of the neighbors came only from their pressure on the grindstone. Work abounded with the all, but, with most of them, kindness did much more abound. There was William Toner, for instance, who lived on the next farm but one and was a great chum of my eldest brother. He never went hunting for pleasure; but seemed always to be finding it in friendly words and kindly deeds. Probably he never knew it; but his company planted in more than one youthful breast the ambition to be like him, and to be as well liked as he was. He was reeve of Pittsburg township for several years; and now, at eighty-two is the hale, hearty, happy caretaker of the Kingston Court House – possibly considered by some a reward for political faithfulness; but in his case, the proof of the general regard for a noble pioneer, a lovable neighbor, and a blameless citizen.

The longer we live the more prone we may be to say "The old was better;" and so develop erroneous perspectives in our view of the past. No doubt there is as good neighborliness in these more rushing times as these was sixty years ago; but there is none better than was abundant among the Ontario pioneers. The bees that were held for quilting by the women; and for barn-raising by the men – to mention only two of the activities in which many hands made light work – were perfect examples of the community spirit, active in home and farm.

The rivalry of the teams chose each for one side of the barn frame was keen. Sometimes two competitors getting hold of the same rafter would have their contest decided by the rafter being cut in half. Once in a while a dispute at a barn-raising would be settled with fists, by appointment

at the nearest hostelry. But episodes like this were the exceptions that proved the rule.

Ours was the first big barn raised in Pittsburg township. The top ends of the wonderful, wide lumber were let into a groove in the plate; and not a nail was used in holding them together. The barn is as sound as the day it was finished eighty years ago.

With my father's death all his children associated one of those manifestations of neighborliness which were then taken as a matter of course; but were really the most perfect exemplification of the blessed spirit that was once shewn on the Jericho road. He died on August 24th, 1867. On the day after the funeral the neighbors came with cradles and rakes and cut the very ripe grain, stoked it; and brought the season's work up to date.

When we went to school there was no talk such as is hear in these days, of attendances having dwindled to five and less. Families were larger – our neighbors, the Woods, had fifteen children. In our school the average attendance was between thirty and forty, with many boys of school age not receiving tuition during the summer. The almost square school building was heated by a stove the iron of which was so thick that it was sometimes noon before we were warmed. From the teacher's desk, under some regimes, we received abundance of chastisement, which was then regarded as harmonising with Solomon's word "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." A boy who usually received commendation for his compositions on animals once wrote that some cows could kick the stars out of the sky – and the Solomonic Scripture was straightaway observed upon him.

The teacher's desk was used by the preachers on the Sunday, when there was a variation in the seating

arrangements. The desks were long, of somewhat rough lumber; and, for school hours were ranged with a close regard for wandering eyes. The boys and girls, sitting on different sides on the aisle, faced different walls – co-education on the back-to-back principle was in a class by itself. On Sundays the congregation was also divided into masculine and feminine, but face-to-face; so that the gospel was received side-ways, in a manner of sitting.

The equipment was sparse. There was no bell; and we were called to study by the rapping of the whipping rod on the door. There were no maps in my earlier days. When some were put on the dingy walls it was as good as a movie is now to see them rolled down.

We had women and men teachers, the men predominating. Three years was the usual period of service. We had nothing like the conditions which obtained, as one has since learned, about Seaforth, in Huron county. There, frequently, the teacher was a farmer whose emolument was the lower because he lived on his own farm. He would sometimes have his pupils drive his stock to market.

We always had regular, full-time teachers, whose salaries rose from $200 to $350. Two Scotchmen remain specially in memory's gallery – one very good, the other not so successful. The less helpful provoked us sometimes to playfulness which reduces discipline at school and enlarges reminiscence when old pupils get together. It was customary for one of the school trustees to cut the wood for the stove. Teacher sometimes would go out to gossip with him – a shining hour which was sometimes improved by setting his chair very close to a knot-hole on the dais, into which he would pitch when, as sometimes happened, he fell asleep after a heavy and somewhat spirituous lunch. We used to get gum from the tamarac trees and chew it in school. This teacher boxed our ears for the impropriety,

and ejected his own tobacco juice into a corner before administering punishment.

David Robb was different. A tall cadaverous bachelor, he seemed to eat next to nothing. Among other services for which his salary could not pay, he taught us astronomy – as to which we were surely in rare case among rural children. The blackboard was inadequate for his illustrations, and so he chalked planets and orbits on the floor. He had the precious faculty of imparting interest to whatever he taught; and we owed him much. After leaving us he married and was appointed school inspector, with headquarters in Brussels, in Huron.

Twenty years later on a Clinton hotel register I saw his name, and went gratefully to his room. He reminded me of the only time I can recall undeservedly being punished. It was by Davy Robb, in the honest belief that I was the leader in a mischief of which, strangely, I happened to be innocent. Inspector Robb said I was the last boy he physically punished; for, when he found out that he had whipped me wrongfully he made up his mind to prevent any similar error. Were any spoiled because Davy spared the rod?

Though we attended school we were busy enough around the farm to become pretty expert in all sorts of work, at an early age. As boys we did not thresh grain with the flail – and implement of skill and peril that the present generation cannot find, except possibly in some remote Ruthenian settlement in the north. You really have to be highly dexterous to be a successful thresher on the floor, wielding the long stick, with a short one at the end swinging on a double wood-and-buckskin swivel, so that, with a minimum of raising the arms, and a swift, circular jerk, the short stick whirls up and around and comes down flat on the heads of grain as, untied from the sheaf, they lie thickly and neatly on the floor.

One winter an Irishman came looking for work. Could he chop? Not very well. What could he do? He could thresh peas in a warm barn. Flogging peas out of pods needs a cold barn, for flailing is its own unfailing heater – a species of spontaneous combustion. This Irishman was too like the robin, who would sit in the barn to keep itself warm, and hide his head under his wing, poor thing.

Except with hope, which they have largely furnished themselves, farm boys have never been properly paid – in the main, no doubt, because the farmer himself has never reaped the just fruit of his infinite toil. People grumble about the farmer being a grumbler. The situation reminds one of an English horsebreeding friend from South Africa, who, during the Boer war, was telling why he was on the British side, even though he had known the Boers for thirty years, and liked them immensely.

"Of course I want us to win," he said; "but, if I were a Dutchman I'd be the same as they are, only a great deal more so."

Wess Speers, Griswold homesteader, expectant Parliamentary candidate, Sifton supporter, and finally one of the ablest of all the colonizers employed by a discerning government; and, incidentally one of the most accomplished raconteurs who ever sat by a stove or in a smoke-room, told from the platform of one of his early adventures in the field of recompense. He worked for his uncle in Halton county, during six of the year's hardest weeks. His relative paid him with an air of abounding generosity, a pillow slip full of dried apples, and a bottle of alderberry wine.

Carelessness can often be an aid to carefulness, even as Jane's fiction about the devil was helpful towards simplicity of speech. At twelve years of age, I got a lesson on the worth of looking before you run into foolhardy danger. My father had died when I was seven years old, and my brothers had

got a new roller – not one of those big logs in general use that were fine, but not so fine as a double iron roller, with which you could produce acres of piecrust if the floor were level enough and the dough plentiful enough. I was sent to roll a field; and prided myself on how straight I drove, missing nothing, and overlapping not a bit too much.

At noon, turning to come home, I let the lines fall between the two sections of the roller; and could not get them out. What did I do but crawl in between the spokes at the end, and try to release the leathers. Almost immediately I realised my predicament if the horses should start – and hastened out. The lesson was never forgotten.

In early April, conceiving the brilliant idea of getting a supply of maple syrup all my own I put a spud into, and a pail under a fine tree, before going to school. All day my mind was on the flowing sap more than on the lesson. After school I hurried home, put my dinner basket inside the door and hurried across the field to the tree. The pail was on its side, empty. The sun had melted the snow which I had not scraped away so as to give it a firm foundation. It was a cruel disappointment and one of the most effective lessons in carefulness I have ever profited by.

In Ontario the roadside hotel has disappeared – the institution that is, though not all the buildings which housed it. Here and there one still sees the substantial house with the deserted verandahs, and the horse sheds fronting the highway; and perhaps the barns which kept the teams overnight. But with revolutions in transportation – Henrys that can be driven home, however many miles away they may be, so long as gas holds out to burn – and the decline of old-fashioned conviviality, places like Birmingham's on the road between Kingston and Brewer's Mills, where Premier Bracken of Manitoba comes from, have no function any more.

It was a delight to go to Birmingham's for the mail; because his post office and hotel, with the school and Anglican church on his two hundred acre farm, brought people together from a big district. As Kingston was nine miles off, and was a town of only four or five thousand people, with few of the attractions which abound in smaller places now, we were happy to regard Birmingham's as the centre of most of out community life.

Some of the traditions of Irish landownership were exemplified at Birmingham's. The whole place radiated the spirit of hospitality. The big house, stucco outside and walnut within, made its frequenters feel altogether at home. How spacious the accommodation was can be judged from the fact that the circuses used to stay there overnight.

The square timber trade of Quebec was one of the marvels of the commerce of that distant port – when great, hewn logs used to be floated down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence in thousands to Cape Rouge above the city, for shipment to Europe, where they were chiefly used for ship masts. This trade was the aristocrat in its field. Square timber men were as well known in Birmingham hotel as Quebec members of Parliament were in Ottawa. The time for burning all the trees that were in the bush had gone by; and there was almost as much pride as money in selling a square stick that would stand in a four-master, and seeing it hauled away to the river in a load drawn by six or eight teams of oxen.

Mr. Birmingham has met his wife, Eliza Colclough, at Quebec. After they were married her sister Sarah came to visit them; and so my father and mother met. The other members of the Colclough family had returned to Wexford, on estate business, which never profited any of us, as far as I know. Strolling through the narrow streets of Wexford, one time, on the way to Tintern Abby, I fell in with a little

boy and girl, to whom I spoke, as my habit is. Finally they asked who I was and got the reply "I'm the minister."

The girl looked hard at me as she said "God forbid."

The Birmingham hotel was burnt down in August 1876; and not a shred of it remains. It was a sad sight to see the stage drive to the barn, and Miss Birmingham sort the mail out-doors. The post office name has been changed to Joyceville. The church has disappeared. The windows were sold to the people around about, and several of them can be recognised in granaries and outhouses. Some of the heavy timber was used in the canal locks. The pews were auctioned.

The condition of the graveyard intensifies the regret with which one sees how the disappearance of a church affects the associations of an honorable past. Once is glad to see in Ontario a movement for beautifying neglected cemeteries, so that the pioneers who made our country may not even seem to be dishonored where they rest. Dr. Kaiser, M.P., of Oshawa heads it.

The long arm of coincidence touches one's recollections of the Birmingham Post Office and hotel. It was a great place for social gatherings. The square dances, Irish jigs, Scotch reels, schottisches and other dances that seem to have little appeal to the youth of this generation, were indulged in, with violin and caller-off competing gaily for the honour of helping most the light fantastic.

About twenty years ago, my wife and little daughter and I were staying with a friend in Masham, Yorkshire; where also was an old army officer who had been much in India, and who made it quite clear that he preferred his own company to strangers'. He thawed a little, after awhile; and when he found we came from Kingston he said he had been stationed there fifty-two years before. He recalled going to a dance in the country at which the violinist did not

turn up; and the music was furnished by a man humming the melodies through the tissue paper wrapped around a lady's hair comb. But he could not think of the name of the place.

I had heard of the paper-and-comb stunt; and when I said "Birmingham's" the officer's thaw-out was complete; and it might have been thought he had never caught social cold in India.

Living in a family that was a family, and not a mere collection of individuals, it happened that my sister Sarah and I grew into a pair of close companions. She died at fourteen leaving me with a most precious memory; and, unintentionally, also leaving a legacy which I value the more as the years increase.

Sunday mornings, sometimes she would call me, while the rest of the family were having their extra sleep, and together we would milk the fifteen cows, and surprise the folks when they arose. We thought it great fun. It isn't affection to mention this aspect of the providential scheme of life. Good mothers produce good daughters who are good sisters, and then good mothers in their turn; and thus the world is saved from the last decline and fall. I owe endless debt to my sister, and I do to my mother; and it is sometimes good to acknowledge a debt even though it is impossible of discharge.

My sister had fine musical ability; and was sent to Kingston to take lessons. One Saturday she brought a girl friend home. I saw them coming up the lane, as I was taking a couple pails of milk to the can under the big maple. The friend was in fair curls; she wore a blue dress that seemed to make her beautiful hair more lustrous, and her skin more delicate. She carried a handkerchief – and I was in an old straw hat and overalls. Not wanting to be seen in such attire by a city exquisite, I avoided an introduction, just then.

When the introduction did come I felt shyer than ever, before so dainty a maid, but I soon became normal enough to notice that she didn't shew the least sign of superiority to us country people. She was as interested in what we were doing as we were – more so, indeed; for what to us was commonplace was novelty to her. She didn't ask citified questions either – none like that of another girl we had heard of, who, going to the barn to see her friend's brother milk the cows, asked, as he was filling the pail, "How often do you do that – once a week?"

This girl from the city was something of a fairy; something of a woman; and, before she returned to Kingston, something of a friend. I missed her when she was gone; and wished I could have driven her back to town, behind one of the horses that I had newly shod – for I was a smith at fifteen. It was a boyish interlude of course, which I really knew very little about, at the time. It is remarkable how such things live in the memory, though, after fifty years, especially when you see the girl on the other side of the fireplace, and think how little she has changed.

Chapter III
IN THE BEGINNING

The land-hunting lure is the strongest thing in the world. It moved Abram from Ur of the Chaldees to the Jordan Valley. His problem was simple enough, against the complexities that beset the earlier settlers in Manitoba and the Farther West. Abram was after grass; and he had to pitch near a river bottom to get it. There was for him no such expanse of empty, fertile land as lay between the Red and Bow rivers, when the promise of a railway across Rupert's Land began to send men flocking towards the setting sun.

One of the strangest of the land-seeking phenomena was the way in which experienced farmers, after trailing over innumerable townships, and seeing vast areas of soil in which there was nothing to offend the plough, would choose some stony lot, which, compared with what they might have had, was too poor to raise a disturbance on it.

For thirty years, as the Canadian Pacific trains sped down the hill from Percival to Broadview, the next division point west of Brandon, passengers could see a log house just north of the track, that was built by a good old Ontario farmer named Scott, as the residence for his second homestead. He was one of the first settlers in the Weed Hills, south-west of Broadview, but his chosen estate was so littered with stones that he was glad to leave it.

In earlier western days people would go where they knew there was no hope of railroad transportation for goodness knew how long. They would search diligently for some spot where they hoped to grow enough big crops to make

their fortunes in a few years. They often seemed oblivious to distance, feeling, apparently, about this tremendous land of infinite possibilities, what Mr. Gladstone sensed about the Heavenly World – that in it neither time nor space was anything at all.

The explanation seems to be that Providence, moving in a mysterious way, its wonders to perform, was sending good people apparently helter-skelter over the prairie; but always with an eye to the future, in which the moving multitude had precious little conscious share. They were after new life in a new setting. They got it; and got it more abundantly – though it was often very hard to endure – and this generation is reaping where they suffered, and where itself strawed not.

The Brandon country, for instance, was not settled in the way a mere traveler through it might suppose. Who, riding in a parlor car, can imagine the discipline of Snooks and Snider, a yoke of steers? Astride the C.P.R. main line, Brandon sits on the southern slope of a noble valley. From its northern environs Brandon looks the goodly fortress of commerce it really is – and looks also as if everything on so large and substantial a scale was meant so to be from the beginning of the prairie country's modern history.

Truthful history cannot elaborate such a tale. Brandon is the accident of pioneering – a very good accident; but just that. After the first settler gave his first hostages to the future of agriculture in these regions a Canadian Pacific map was published which shews the projected railway to be nearly forty miles away – just about where Neepawa is now.

That is Sandford Fleming's map, in his report on the western aspects of that leviathan governmental enterprise, dated April 8th, 1880. It does not even shew anything of the quality of land along the Assiniboine where Brandon

is now. The routes of the earlier spyers-out of the country, for rail and farm purposes, did not happen to cross this immediate region. It is one of those on which the C.P.R. chief engineer reported that they "so far as known, have not been explored."

The country had been travelled; for trans-secting it, and crossing the Assiniboine at what are named "Rapids" is a cart road, which branched off the main trail from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice and Edmonton, and went through Wood Mountain to Fort Walsh, south east of Medicine Hat. In some places it had been called the great trading route. This same map shows the Weed Hills, south-west of what is now Broadview, and, indeed, all sorts of hills, the names of which are in no modern geographies. But it does not mention the Brandon Hills – they were in a country said to be unexplored, though they were well know to those who knew the country.

Then how was this Brandon land explored? By whom was it introduced to that process which the pamphleteers who never drove oxen used to delight to describe as tickling the soil with a hoe and seeing it laugh with a harvest? It has already been set forth that Manitoba, long a base and gathering ground for The Company of Gentleman Adventures, was mainly plough-pioneered from Ontario. But, curiously enough, the Brandon region had as its outstanding pioneers noble people from farther east. The first were the McVicars of Grand Valley. The most notable were the Roddicks, of Brandon Hills. The McVicars hailed from Grenville, Quebec. The Roddicks came from Pictou, Nova Scotia, the county which is credibly said to raise more college presidents to the square mile than any other segment of the globe.

A generation has arisen that knew not Grand Valley, Brandon's parent. Brandon didn't bring up father; but

extinguished a most hopeful forbear. Old timers, like myself, occasionally inveigle inquiring, confiding strangers to the site of Grand Valley town, once the rising hope of a territory as big as Wales; but now a grassy, windswept flat by the Assiniboine's side where, approaching the Grand Rapids, it flows as swift as the mightier Saskatchewan, and almost cuts a figure eight.

Grand Valley was two miles east of Rosser and Sixth Street. A view of the grass, the stream, and the Manitoba maples tells nothing of the pioneers in agriculture and commerce who once located there; and built high expectations of wealth and ease, as they toiled and traded, under conditions that would terrify some of their descendants.

Grand Valley might have been called McVicar; but it wasn't; because of a McVicar modesty that cared nothing for perpetual fame. In 1878 two McVicar brothers, Dougal and John, came west from Grenville, in Argenteuil county, leaving Mrs. Dougal to enjoy the society of the old home till they could make a new, likely enough with extremely few comforts except the greatest of all, which money cannot furnish and adversity cannot destroy. The brothers sallied forth from Winnipeg to look for land. There was plenty of land you didn't have to look for; but they wanted some of their own.

It was only eight years after the redcoats had walked into Fort Garry to find Riel's abandoned breakfast upon the table. Manitoba had had its two republics – of which Riel's was the second. The first was set up at Portage la Prairie, in the year before the Canadian Confederation was born. The buffalo were all but extinct in the Red River Valley; but the Indians weren't. The country was still in the Great Lone Land, wherein anything might happen to the down-easter whose experience had all been gained where

woods abounded. The McVicar brothers started out from Winnipeg, searching for free fertility; but not expecting to find it until long after they had crossed the Portage Plains, already pretty well occupied, and the town blessed with a mill, set up by the present Senator Watson.

The McVicars pushed west, and farther west, digging into the ground, sampling the soil as best they could, comparing what they dug with what they had seen, but not really knowing anything of its phosphoric content. They found nothing to suit them till they struck the Assiniboine Valley, near where the fur traders' cart road crossed the tortuous stream. It was indeed, a goodly sight; as it is today; and the McVicars soon decided that here was the place to which their families must be brought.

They had to go to Millford, which was near the present-day Stockton, on the Winnipeg-Souris line, to enter for their land. Millford is not even in the Post Office Guide now. Then it had visions of greatness, as every Government location had. But the McVicars could not enter specifically; for the good reason that their chose tract was not surveyed. That piece of the unexplored doesn't carry township lines in the Fleming map of two years later.

Nor, indeed, does that fascinating map give any detailed indication of what was to happen along the railway's location through the present-day Neepawa and Minnedosa country. In truth, while the McVicars were hunting for a farm, and while the public was feeding on rumours, as the ass fed on the east wind, the C.P.R. engineers were working on their second location for the main line, west of the Red River, which was to be crossed at Selkirk, to avoid the calamities of floods that would beset any railway as far upstream as Winnipeg.

The first survey was set straight across the country between the lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg to The Narrows,

between Dauphin Lake and Lake Winnipegosis, up around the Duck Mountains, and then through the Swan River Valley; straight west to Battleford; and thence to the Yellowhead Pass, not even striking Fort Edmonton, which was to be left twenty miles to the north.

The Fleming map of 1880 shews that the Narrows-Swan River route had been abandoned, and a second location was given, which missed Portage la Prairie by eight miles; and skirted the southern slope of the Riding Mountains as far as where Rossburn now is. The road was to join the original location at Nut Hill, a few miles north of present day Rama, on the old Canadian Northern, about forty miles west of Fort Pelly, the capital of the North West Territory, from the time Manitoba became a province, in 1870, until Battleford was built in 1876 by Hugh Sutherland, still happily in Winnipeg.

But Brandon was no more dreamed of than preachers dream of sacrilege. The McVicars wanted a farm; not a railway that would make shipment of farm produce profitable. They kept off the trail that led to Prince Albert, and followed the one that made for the Assiniboine. Ten miles east of the crossing above the Rapids they passed the last settler's house. When they cried "Eureka" in the valley, they didn't even know of the Brandon Hills, a few miles away. They pitched their tent by the riverside; built a habitation of sods; bought some implements, made Tanner's Crossing – it is Minnedosa now – their post office; and got busy against winter. Almost their first visitors were a couple of preachers; who were certainly ahead of congregational prospects.

How little the country was known can be judged from what the McVicars did that winter. They wanted a better house than sods could afford – though, if they had realized it, a sod house is the warmest in winter and the coolest in

summer that can be cheaply built in this western country. They went forty miles away, into the Riding Mountains to cut logs and haul them to the Little Saskatchewan River. In the spring they rafted them into the Assiniboine, down to their farm; and took them from the water there.

They could have got all the house logs they needed from the Brandon Hills, whence came many dwellings – such for instance as the log house built by the late Vasey Winteringham, just north of the valley, seven miles from Brandon, and only recently demolished. The excessive labor and discomfort of building a winter shelter in the woods and bringing the logs downstream, when the men might have been ploughing, is typical of what has happened to thousands of pioneer settlers, through lack of knowledge of surrounding conditions.

Soon the McVicars had a log house, fourteen by sixteen, with a board floor, a luxury, which, for awhile, seemed to them as though it must have been transported from a New Jerusalem street. They had quite a job building it; for they had only an axe, a shovel and a pickaxe. Behind a pair of ponies a trip to Portage la Prairie, seventy miles, brought some seed potatoes as well as grain; and in 1879 they had a crop of sorts.

The summer was kind; and in August Dougal McVicar set out to Winnipeg to meet his wife. It sounds odd, but it is true, that he broke his journey at Portage la Prairie, to complete it by stern-wheel steamer. The romanticists haven't made half enough of the prairie navy which was a feature of our early history – or rather of our second early history.

There was a navy, and, as if to make up for the absent picturesqueness of sails, its rear admiral was Captain Sheats. So many people have assumed that the prairie schooner was the only ship of the plains; that somebody

should make himself the archivist of the vessels in which Jim Hill was financially interested, that used to come down the Red River with passengers from the east via St. Paul and St. Cloud; and especially of those which, during several seasons, climbed the Assiniboine.

When the McVicars came the naval terminus was at Currie's Landing, a few miles below Grand Rapids. But in the next summer – 1879 – the Marquette, Captain Weber in command, ascended the Assiniboine to Fort Ellice, where the Qu'Appelle comes in; and for several seasons navigation proceeded so far inland that it was seriously predicted that the flatbottomed stern-wheelers would get up the Qu'Appelle as far as the Hudson's Bay fort, where now there is a splendid sanitarium for the cure of tuberculosis.

Indeed, the Fleming report quotes from Professor Macoun's report of 1879, that it had been stated to him as a fact in Winnipeg that the South Saskatchewan could easily be let into the Qu'Appelle at the Elbow, north west of Moose Jaw. It was a great expectation – navigation from Lake Winnipeg to Calgary, on three rivers. Macoun destroyed it by taking levels, which showed the Saskatchewan bed to be seventy-three feet lower than the Qu'Appelle spring.

One doubts whether anywhere in the world such big vessels have climbed so far above sea level over so tortuous a route as the prairie navy did from Winnipeg. Some liberal-minded estimater has guessed that from Winnipeg to Fort Pelly, the ultimate landing stage of the stern-wheelers in 1881, the nautical distance is twelve hundred miles. That, surely, puts too great a strain on faith; for it transcends the C.P.R. estimate of seven hundred water miles to Fort Ellice, compared with two hundred and ten miles by rail. Anyway Assiniboinean distances are far enough; and though the river, naturally, is not so like a corkscrew near its confluence with the Red as it is in the highlands; the fact

it took Dougal McVicar, his wife and three children three days to steam from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie, is pretty good indication that the ascent of Manitoba's second river was a formidable place of prairie seamanship.

McVicar has left his team at Portage – an odd proceeding, unless he was too much of a born sailor that nothing could keep him off a keel. He could have driven to Winnipeg and back faster than he steamed one way. James Ashdown, the tinsmith, who died one of the West's solidest millionaires, once walked from Fort Garry to Portage and back between Friday afternoon and Monday morning, in the vain quest of a thousand dollars from his father-in-law, with which to buy out a competitor.

Events furnished a most convincing reason why McVicar would have done better to drive to the meeting place with his wife. At Portage he put his horses into a pasture. When he came back they had vanished. He had to lodge his family with Indians for a week, while he hunted for a team. When they set out for the home that had been christened while they were in Winnipeg, there had been so much rain, that the anticipation of a glad arrival, and the triumphant breaking of a piece of wonderful news, was somewhat damped.

The McVicars had changed from the good ship Marquette to the prairie schooner, which held their trunks, cooking outfits and provisions; and were almost eaten alive by bulldog flies. Then they met large bands of Indians, all dressed up in feathers and paint – something new and terrible to the lady; and not very pleasing to her spouse. The second night on the trail, while they still hoped to reach home in the pitch darkness, they stuck in Big Boggy Creek, about twelve miles from their destination. McVicar got out on the wagon tongue, let the horses go; and the mired family made the best of the night under their own tilt.

At daybreak they saw they were close to a house; where they were received with all hospitality by Mr. and Mrs. David Black, their near neighbors – ten miles was almost a prodigy in propinquity in those times. Later in the day they landed at the newly denominated crossing of the river, and broke the news that in Winnipeg Mrs. McVicar had been appointed mistress of Grand Valley Post Office; and, in proof thereof, produced the official papers, and the mail for seventy settlers known to be in all that region.

The chief Dominion postal officer in Winnipeg had authority to create offices at discretion. When on the McVicar representation he had agreed to start a post office at McVicar's place, he wanted to call it McVicar. McVicar was too little in love with his own name to agree. But he had been blowing to his wife, by letter and speech, that the valley was grand in which their fortune was cast, and Mrs. McVicar suggested calling the post office Grand Valley – and so it came to pass. I never learned whether a couple of years later this most admirable of women pioneers had anything to say about another and more vital decision affecting the family fortunes – but, of this, more later.

The Blacks had come first to where Rapid City now is, from Guelph; and had moved down to their farm, on good advice. They stayed there till the end. A few years ago their son was reeve of Elton. He has kept up the family reputation for hospitable neighborliness – indeed it was in his blood; and was unfailingly exercised when he was still a boy, in the very early days.

In the winter of 1879-80, a few other settlers having come in, Mrs. Grant, four miles from the Blacks, was taken suddenly ill. There was no doctor in the country; and Grant made for the Blacks'; for aid. It seemed to Mrs. Black that the trouble was scurvy, for the Grants had been without

vegetables for several months. Mrs. Black instantly decided to go to the distressed neighbor.

The snow was deep; and there was no trail. The future reeve of Elton, then fourteen years old, said he would break the trail for his mother. They set out, carrying a pail of potatoes, for medicine. It was an exhausting toil; and Mrs. Black was nearly all in when she arrived. She stayed with Mrs. Grant, and administered potatoes, while the boy returned home; and she continued to stay till Mrs. Grant was recovered. The episode was characteristic of pioneers who, surely, were providentially selected for laying the foundation of a social order against which it could never be said that, finding any hungry they gave him no meat, or sick and visited him not.

McVicar's faith in the crossing as the future emporium of trade had procured him the post office, albeit there was a store on the northern slope's summit, three miles nearer where Chater now is, kept by a Mr. Dickson. All the McVicars were much given to hospitality; and they inevitably became hosts after the manner of stopping places of that era. Various pioneer houses, on occasion, became as popular at night as sleeping cars, filled to capacity, can be. Mrs. Dougal McVicar brought three children. John McVicar's family, which followed, was almost as numerous. A Mr. McFadden joined Dougal's household. The house became known as a travellers' rest.

The Post Office made it a natural capital of a territory as extensive, one guesses, as the biggest Ontario county.

Chapter IV
FIRST BRANDON HILLS SETTLEMENT

It was not long before the prophecy of Grand Valley becoming a business centre began to be fulfilled. Settlers arrived, not in avalanches, but in an increasing stream. This, remember, was before it was known that the main line of the C.P.R. would come that way.

One remarkable band of immigrants had arrived, at the head of which was the man who deserves to be called the patriarch of Brandon. He was a preacher, though not of the two who first represented the cloth at the McVicar place. The Rev. George Roddick was the West from his parsonage in Pictou, Nova Scotia. It was reputed to be a land fit for buffalo and Indians only. Talk of building the Canadian Pacific Railway across the plains, and through the mountains, had led to the immortal prophecy by a great statesman that even if the impossible were achieved, the road would not earn money enough to pay for its axle grease.

Mr. Roddick knew all this; but he was a reader; and knew also that reliable men had reported to Governments on the magnitude and fertility of the plains. He was convinced that the rocky hinterlands of the Atlantic shore would never make a Promised Land, and he determined to become a prairie farmer, without ceasing to be a priest unto God – diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He followed the Abramic example; and on April 17th, 1879, with a party which included Mrs. Roddick and their

seven boys and girls, he was dumped into the mud of St. Boniface. Their long, tedious journey from Nova Scotia, via Chicago and St. Paul, had been broken in Minnesota for the purchase of oxen and other settlers' effects.

The Roddick party was bound for Prince Albert, because it had been said the country thereabouts was very good – which, indeed, it is – and also because it was believed the C.P.R. was going through that forepost of civilization, which was then mapped merely as a Presbyterian mission and a Hudson's Bay Company's farm. That belief, like so many others, was unfounded, for the chose route missed Prince Albert by over sixty miles, as the crow flies.

Those were years of superabundant rain – not the customary showers of blessing; but deluges more Noahic than that which worried the Presbyterian minister in Scotland who, having prayed for the end of a drought, saw so much flood descend that, next Sabbath he turned aside from thanksgiving to remonstrance: "But this incessant downpour, Lord, is ridiculous."

With the Reverend George Roddick, Mrs. Roddick and their seven children, were Mr. Hugh Rice and Mr. Hugh MacPherson, (whose family remained in the East), Mr. McKay, Mr. McCabe, Henry Dunbar, John Crawford and three Stewart brothers, Charley, Jack and Joe. From the start out of St. Boniface, the rains descended and the floods came. The oxen were soft, after a quiet Minnesotan winter, and seemed to nurse a great reluctance to working under the Union Jack. Frequently the wagons were stuck in the ever-recurring sloughs. Many a time Mrs. Roddick and her girls had to be carried to less soggy land.

There were no sign-posts to Prince Albert; and our travellers kept on the southern fork at the trail five or six miles north of Carberry – there was then no Carberry, of course; for the year was '79, and the railway was not built

through that district until 1881. Carberry, by the way was called DeWinton, until after it became part of Manitoba. To make Prince Albert, they should have chosen the northern fork, which would have taken them to Fort Ellice, and then over the Touchwood Hills, through Humboldt, which retained the name of the telegraph station there, when the Canadian Northern main line was built almost on the original survey of the Canadian Pacific, through the country which was reported by the early surveyors as among the best in the west.

The Roddick voyagers found travel by ox-wagon, through interminable mire, was far slower in speed and more costly in sustenance than they had supposed. On the Carberry plain they had met a lone bachelor, John Barron, whose little house was open to them; and who, later, when he was about to become the first bridegroom in all that region, sent for Mr. Roddick to tie the knot.

By the time the Roddick party reached the Assiniboine Valley they knew they were off the Prince Albert trail. It would be a big job to go back on their tracks, or to strike north till they hit the other road. The country here was good to look upon. It was obvious that going nearly five hundred miles farther into emptiness wouldn't bring prospective farms any nearer to profitable markets. By the time they were on the Assiniboine's banks and on the McVicar place, (which was unoccupied, as the brothers were bringing logs from the Riding Mountains), Here and Now looked far better than Yonder and Then.

The shades of night were falling fast. The sky was black with promise of more depressing rain. Camp had to be made; for if a strange and swollen river must be crossed it had better be ventured in broadest day. So, it was a weary band that sat down at the as yet un-named Grand Valley to eat what they had, as soon as the tents were up, and to hope

for not too fierce a night. They were scarcely abed when the thunder and the deluge broke so unkindly that the men, perforce, arose, and sat on the pegs, outside, praying that nothing worse would befall the women and children. It would have been ridiculous had it not been so perilous.

Next morning a council decided to let Prince Albert take care of itself; and to homestead on the high ground, east of this tempestuous Jordan. Provisions were low. While in pairs some of the men set about locating land, and the others were busy erecting shelter, Mrs. Roddick and her son, David, a boy of seventeen, drove a team of oxen north to where Rapid City afterwards was put on the map, and where she heard a stock of provisions could be obtained from Sibbald's store.

It was a brave venture for a woman in a strange country; but the woman was Mrs. Roddick. She did not know how near the men were to starting back east, yesterday, if only she had hinted a readiness to retreat. She was indomitable and cheerful; and they became courageous too.

She started off with Dave, and after a long day reached a river over which she had to pay to cross to Sibbald's. She read her list of what she needed to Sibbald, and was distressed to learn that all he could supply was half a gallon of syrup. So, with this, Mrs. Roddick returned, very lightly equipped with sweetness for heavy labours, in a hungry land.

The only thing to do was to send to Portage for supplies. At that time Mrs. McVicar had not arrived; there was not even a name, much less a Post Office, at the Assiniboine Crossing.

From the high ground above the present Chater the Roddick men noticed a blue line to the south-east; and wondered what it betokened. The explored; found it to be a spruce bush, and so began bringing logs for houses.

They had lived nearer the sea than the forest, and were not axemen. At first some of them made a poor job of felling trees; but they persevered; and the Roddicks had a log cabin on the high ground, north-east of Chater before the McVicars could build one at the Valley, out of their Riding Mountain prizes.

Big events sometimes turn on little pivots. The Roddick settlers were not quite at ease about their location. They held meetings around their camp fire day after day; but they had begun their homesteads; and would have probably taken permanent root, except for a half-breed named Ross, who chanced to pass that way, while Mr. and Mrs. Roddick were absent. "Why do you live here?" Ross asked the Roddick boys. "Why don't you go where there is plenty of food and water;" and he told them of the Brandon Hills, vaguely visible in the blue haze across the river.

This led to a journey of exploration by Mr. Roddick, Hugh Macpherson, John Copeland, Gordon Halliday, and Henry Dunbar. Mr. Dunbar later became a Roddick son-in-law, and helped to organize the first picnic, in the district, to celebrate the advent of the pioneers. Robert Roddick told me in hospital, shortly before he died, that he hoped there would be a centennial celebration in fulness of time.

The party slept under the stars and next morning walked westwards until they saw a lake. As they approached it a curious impulse, which has its place in all the psychologies of the pioneer, wherever he is, asserted itself. "Name this place" is as inevitable in the birth of communities, as "Name this child" is in Christian parentage.

These men felt like discoverers; and instantly realised that so fine a sheet of water must have a baptism. But how and what? They agreed to race to its shore; and he who first reached the water should name the lake after himself. Macpherson won; and for years the lake was so written on

the maps. Then another sort of ambition had its way. Mr. Clementi Smith became land agent at Brandon; and Lake Macpherson became Lake Clementi. Mrs. Macpherson still lives on the original homestead. Her two sons are amongst the most prosperous farmers in the locality. She has mothered more than one child bereft of parents.

Mr. Roddick was the first to decide to abandon the north-of-Chater location for the hills; and when he moved, Macpherson and Dunbar moved with him. The Assiniboine was a much-deterring Rubicon to their other friends. At first they hesitated to follow their leader; and, when they did set forth, intending to find their new homesteads, they dreaded the crossing; there being as yet no ferry, such as later became common enough in the West – a flat-bottomed scow, carried back and forth by the current while held to a wire stretched across the stream.

The season was still fairly early, the current was swollen and swift; there had been no exploration for a place where the stream might have widened sufficiently to make the water shallow enough for a ford. The only thing to do was to swim the oxen; to caulk the wagon box with mud, and make a boat of it. The Roddick party had done this previously; and had crossed safely, only three men getting into the box at a time, and two of them ferrying the third across, using shovels for paddles.

McKay swam the flood, with a rope in his mouth; and so was the crossing was accomplished. With him in the part were Rice and the three Stewarts. Rice wanted to leave the wagon box in the river, so that it would swell, against their return; for he didn't think much of mud as a caulk. He was out-voted; and the party drove on, met the Roddicks, cruised around for homesteads which they found; and, on the Sunday morning decided to return to their places on the north of the river.

Mr. Roddick warned them against so much deviation from Sabbatarian practice; but they heeded him not; and chanced a judgement, which they presently feared was all too surely overtaking them.

At the river, seeing the current swirling from the south side over to the north, at the bend; they decided to launch their box-boat, and trust to being carried to the opposite land. Perhaps it was an evil spirit which urged them to this, and also led them to neglect caulking their barque afresh; and then to increase their perils by overloading their clumsy craft. All five piled in, pulled out; and, half-way over, saw the water rushing through the useless caulk. Plainly, the box would fill before the bank was reached. The Stewarts, being capable swimmers, jumped out; so as to save themselves, and give the others a better chance. But the niceties of equilibrium were not nicely calculated; and as the Stewarts went out, the box went over.

Rice was a very powerful man; and grabbed the box, climbed on it, upside down as it was; and then forgot all about homesteads in the sensation of the thing steadily sinking at his end. He thought of Roddick's warning. His past life and visions of his loved ones panoramed before his mortal view. Joe Stewart, finding the water icy cold, the current very swift; and the bank very far, grabbed the side of the box; and announced that, otherwise, he would drown. The whole party felt that it was a case of "Die, dog, or eat the hatchet."

For hours, it seemed, they were in deadly peril, with Rice, as he used to say, fully determined that any attempt of his friends to board his submarine would be resisted. Really, in a very few minutes, the box bumped the bank; and the imperiled ones clambered to dry land. If a branch of the Lord's Day Alliance had been handy, they would have vowed never to forsake it. The incident was laughed over

afterwards, as a charming interlude. Joe Stewart claimed he saved Rice's life by touching bottom and guiding the box to shore. Rice maintained he saved Stewart.

As the summer advanced the Roddick settlement in the hills enlarged till it consisted of twelve men and boys, Mrs. Roddick and her three girls. There could be no grain crop that year; and the warm months were spent doing some breaking, the first sod being turned by young Melville Roddick, and getting ready for winter – houses for the humans; stables and hay for the beasts. When winter came some of the men went to Winnipeg for work; which was not difficult to obtain, for railway construction had come to the prairies beyond the Red River; the first real estate boom was hustling along and the future, seen through the halo that speculation always conjures, was like the roseate hues of early dawn.

The Roddick house was of logs, covered with lumber brought from Winnipeg by boat to Currie's Landing. It was the principal habitation between the Assiniboine and the United States of America; and became a favorite place of call for any who were journeying that way. Frequently the sleepers in the house were so many that they lay on the floor like sardines in a tin. In the fall Mr. Roddick, and his neighbor Mair, whose place was not far from the site of the old Hudson's Bay fort called Brandon House, made a trip to Portage la Prairie. They became lost, and had to put in a night out-doors. Roddick said he had to dance the hornpipe to keep from freezing. At Portage la Prairie Mr. Roddick bought a load of potatoes, which he put in a hole in the ground, and, when winter came, he turned them to gospel account.

Unlike some preachers who abandoned the pastoral field, Mr. Roddick never gave the slightest impression that he had left the pulpit for the pulpit's good. To the last he was

a messenger of the Lord; and, during this, his first winter on the plains, he announced that all who came to service at his house would receive a meal of potatoes. They came, sought first the Kingdom of God; and the murphies, which boiled while they heard, were added unto them. And to the murphies, Mrs. Roddick added tea.

Chapter V
THE RISE AND FALL OF GRAND VALLEY

Grand Valley might have been called Grand Rapids; for, besides being above the Assiniboine's grand rapids, which could not be navigated at night, as a commercial centre it had a grand and rapid career – grand in hope and rapid in decline. It rose with all the proud confidence of a metropolis lifting its towers high unto heaven. It fell even more quickly than it rose; for Brandon was suddenly brought into being; and, except in such records as this, the place that knew Grand Valley then is likely to know its name no more forever.

The summer following the winter in which Mr. Roddick was sowing the Word at home, in Grand Valley and in Carberry, saw a great rush into the Brandon country; and the burgeoning forth of Grand Valley as the original Assiniboine metropolis. McVicar had made a boat in which the public crossed the river for mail. He put up a sod stable that was mainly used by freighters. A wharf was build for the fleet. The tides of trade lapped the post office, as the descending waters lapped the river bank.

The town which grew around the site of McVicar's original sod house was on the north side of the river because it was not easy to cross the swift-flowing stream when settlement first came to the region. It was very different for the later towns which sprang up as railways came in; for it was easier and cheaper to haul logs from the spruce bush that to bring lumber over a great distance at a cost of

sixty dollars a thousand feet. But it was not until the C.P.R. became a probability along the Assiniboine that Grand Valley began to see its own peculiar visions and dream its highest dreams.

That was the age of illimitable rumor and rivalry on which communities waxed and waned. At Tanner's Crossing, where the first post office in all this region was established, there was for several years great confidence that the Canadian Pacific would cross the Little Saskatchewan there, and the second vast city of the plain be built. This idea developed after the more detailed surveys which followed Sandford Fleming's great journey to the Coast in 1872. The rivalry of Rapid City, the lots of which sold so largely in Winnipeg, and the ambitions of which can be gauged from the fact that this embryo metropolis began with eight miles square of intersecting streets, made Minnedosans keener than ever, up to and including 1880-81. But for one settler at least, Minnedosa was to be really the jumping-off place for Grand Valley, as Grand Valley became his jumping-off place for Brandon.

My cousin, Alec Trotter came west in 1878. He bought a yoke of oxen, wagon and outfit in Winnipeg, and set forth to discover the ideal farm. Tanner's Crossing then seemed to be the frontier of agricultural settlement; and Alec's idea was that somewhere beyond the Crossing he would find his prairie home. It seems hardly credible, but it is true, that he was three weeks on the way from Winnipeg to Tanner's Crossing, owing partly to the flooded condition of the country and partly to his unfamiliarity with ox travel. Some of the people who passed him thought he was foolish to implement his Presbyterian principles of Sabbath observance, for Alec would not advance his camp a yard on the Lord's day. But he got there, just the same.

Having forded the river and become acquainted at George Lindsay's store, he found a quarter section to suit him, right where the town of Basswood now stands. He made his homestead entry at Odanah, where the Dominion office was in charge of Mr. Ferguson, who afterwards became the county court clerk in Brandon.

Alec soon fell in with Mr. MacIntosh, another homesteader and they agreed to work together, and to build MacIntosh's house first. At it they went, chopping, lugging, hauling the light green logs, sorting them to proper lengths, and notching them. They almost had the house completed when, going to the bush for his load, Trotter met MacIntosh's oxen without a driver. It was raining and lightning. He hustled on and found MacIntosh on the ground, dead from a lightning stroke, holding in one hand his axe and in the other his dinner pail. Trotter made a coffin for his friend, stained it black, and buried him on the homestead. Sadly, he built his own house alone.

The next year Alec grew some crop, which was frosted, and received the company of Fred Kyde from Pittsburg township, who sallied forth after reading Alec's letters on the great opportunities of the great west. Kyde also bought a yoke of oxen in Winnipeg, and trailed his lonesome way to the Little Saskatchewan Valley. He had neither Alec's Sabbatarianism, nor his sobriety. Alec was satisfied with the cup that cheers. Fred carried a bottle of whisky in a satchel strapped to the near ox's horns.

Just why this device of safety first was adopted cannot now be told. Perhaps it was done with the idea of reducing the temptation to consumption while mileage was being made. Fred Kyde did not become a permanent settler on the land. We shall see him again.

The rivalries of Minnedosa and Rapid City were somewhat dimmed during 1880 by the rumors that somehow

leaked in from the East to the effect that, after all, the C.P.R. would take a more southerly route. Again the crop was frosted, and in the winter of 1880-81 Alec Trotter went back to his trade, built the town hall at Minnedosa and, in the spring, Grand Valley stock being on the rise, he moved over there to take contracts, walking all the way with John Thompson, afterwards M.P.P. for Minnedosa. They slept in their clothes on the floor of Mr. Clark's house, two miles north of Grand Valley.

Nobody could properly describe the long-drawn disappointment following hope which the northern towns endured at that time. At Rapid City, or instance, besides a saw mill, grist mill and several stores, there was an academy built by Professor McKee, one of the most admirable educationists the West has ever had. When the hope of the Canadian Pacific crossing the Little Saskatchewan at Rapid City began to give place to misgivings, meetings were held in boarding tents, deputations were sent to Ottawa protesting against a change in the route.

But Grand Valley was in the ascendant. Even before the spring freshet, railway surveyors began to arrive. McVicar's unsurveyed land was put on the market in lots. Excitement increased as the days went by. The prairie soon became dotted with tents, then with sod houses and wooden shacks. People came by stage, in wagons, on foot and by boat. Contractors, sub-contractors, railway material were arriving; and those who had come in expecting to be on the outskirts of civilization for an indefinite time, regarded themselves as the first citizens of what they expected to be the first great city west of Winnipeg.

The prairie navy was extremely active in that spring of '81; and brought up from Portage la Prairie, the end of steel, some of the future leading citizens of Grand Valley, who became also leading citizens of Brandon.

That it was a real marine, and that the voyagers upon it felt that they were mariners on no mean journey, bound to no mean port, and that Brandon was still unborn to the public mind, becomes vivid to us from reading this letter:

"River Assiniboine, Near Grand Valley,
"May 3rd, 1881
"To Capt. Haycock and Officers of the Steamer Marquette:

"Gentlemen, we the undersigned passengers on this, your first trip up the Assiniboine River for the season of 1881, beg leave to tender you our sincere thanks for the uniform kindness and courtesy bestowed on us by one and all, from the highest officers in command to the humblest hand on board. And in this connection we would particularly mention the kindness of Mr. H. R. Jones, the gentlemanly and obliging purser, who has at all times been pleased to attend to all out enquiries and wants, within his power and jurisdiction, and we congratulate the North West Navigation Co. in having had the good fortune to secure the services of so efficient an officer. The steward and those under his control have all been most assiduous and kind in looking after our personal comforts so far as lay within their power: the menu has been excellent, and good enough to please the most fastidious.

"Sir, the Steamer Marquette, on its present trip, bears to Grand Valley a small company of 27 persons, the precursors of many more to follow, intent on founding, on those beautiful plains of the Great North West, a town, which may, and is likely to become, one of the greatest cities of the continent, which is no small honor, and full of interest to one and all for us. May the kind officers, and this staunch boat, long survive, to convey many more such companies to the same destination. Our parting words are

'Happy to meet, sorry to part, and happy to meet again.'

"W. J. Graham, M.D., St. Catherines, Ont.; George Horner, Winnipeg; J. M. Cameron, Toronto, Ont.; Arthur Craker, Winnipeg; George Ward, Detroit, Mich; A. McCollum, Toronto; I .L. Webster, Nova Scotia; Hugh Fraser, Portage la Prairie; James Logan, Thamesville, Ont.; Alex Gregonie, Bothwell, Ont.; John D. Fraser, Pictou Co., N.S.; A. A. McCow, St. Thomas, Ont.; R. F. Evans, Hamilton, Ont.; R. R. Dickson, Detroit, Mich.; Henry Reed, Linden; H. Bradford, Chatboro, P. Q.; Ezra Barron, Winterbourne; W. J. Lang, Branchton, Ontario; Wm. H. Bradford, Chatboro, P. Q.; Walter Gerry, Perth, Ont.; E.J. Curran, Winnipeg; Mrs. T. Struthers, Portage la Prairie; Mrs. Johnston Rutherford, Shakespeare, Ont.; Joseph Burke, Quebec; Mrs. D. Dunn, Angus, Ont.; Mrs. James Cairncrop, Shakespeare, Ont.; George Hannam, Whitby Ont."

One party that arrived included Mr. Thos. Lee, Robt. Mulligan, (who afterwards ran the first liquor store on Sixth Street, later occupied by William Muir as a grocery), Mr. James Cavanagh, who afterwards became postmaster at Brandon, Mr. Winter the second mayor of the city and his partner Mr. O'Neill, who was afterwards magistrate at Souris, and the family of Mr. Browning who settled on the farm which overlooks the dam and power works above the mouth of the Little Saskatchewan.

Right up to his death, since the war, in which his only son, and his eldest grandson lost their lives, nobody enjoyed telling his experiences of Grand Valley's most grave, exciting spring more than Mr. Lee, who started in Grand Valley the harness business which, when it moved to Sixth Street, was distinguished by much original advertising, such as this bill from the Mail Print:-

"To the Public and Especially the Farmers. I beg leave to inform you, by a lucky turn of the wheel, that I am now

in a position to offer you harness at prices never before heard of. My motto is to keep down expenses and give the purchaser the benefit.

"I don't dwell in marble halls with plate glass fronts, but I have got over two hundred sets of team harness, all hand-made out of the best stock in Canada, and by a firm who tan their own leather, manufacture more harness than any other four firms in Canada combined, and who are also manufacturers of Trunks, Valises and every other thing in the trade.

"I know what I am talking about when I say that I can undersell any other house in Manitoba. I don't believe in quoting prices; all I ask of you is to see the goods for yourselves and get the prices.

"I am still in the same old place on Sixth Street. I was here before the flood and going to stay."

One is not quite sure as to which flood Mr. Lee refers. It was a great treat to hear his story of the inundation which astonished Grand Valley very shortly after he arrived.

With his friends, Mr. Lee left the steamer at Currie's Landing, six miles down the valley, judging it speedier to walk straight than to stay on the stern-wheeler as she crawled up one of the most crooked courses in North America. He found a fellow Ottawan in Mr. Brownlee, who was running a dining hall in a fine, big, floored tent that was lighted by lanterns and partitioned off into rooms, each of which was supplied with blankets for weary travellers. Mr. Brownlee was a good hotel-man, but otherwise trained.

Next morning Mr. Lee rented Mrs. McVicar's woodshed for a harness shop, and, as soon as the steamer came, hung up his wares and began business. Things were going along well, everyone happy, with population coming in, weather fine and dry, and trails rather dusty. One day, they noticed the river swelling. After a few hours, it rose with

extraordinary rapidity and presently Mr. Lee, in his wood-shed, and Mrs. McVicar in her part of the postel house, were working knee-deep in water.

Nearby, a Mr. Hopper who had a small fruit and refreshment shop, was a little shrewder than some of his neighbors, for he got a wagon box, caulked it up tight and, with a pole, paddled himself to dry ground; making a joke of the episode. Indeed an eye for the odd effect always belonged to him. He was one of the first business men to seek a place in the sun at Brandon. He was asked for a contribution to a church social, and gave the requesting lady a dozen eggs.

"If they are good" he said, "say I gave them. If they aren't, tell the folks you gave them yourself."

Finally Mr. Brownlee's tent, which was home for a large portion of the population, rose and floated down the stream until it was held up by a big tree, where it remained for days, flapping in the wind. The tent flooring, which made an excellent raft, was, in a way, a testimony to the constructive capacity of Mr. Brownlee, who afterwards became city engineer at Brandon.

It was thought the flood would last only a few hours. Mrs. McVicar moved her stove and the children upstairs. When night came she made the best of her opportunities for rest, and the least of the danger that the whole house might be swept away. Mr. Lee sat on the roof of his wood-shed with a lantern, hoping that he could more easily discern when the waters would abate, and wondering what would happen to him if they continued to rise.

The waters did not recede for ten days, during which time Mr. McVicar brought the mail to the high ground, and then by boat to the house, running the prow through the front door to the stairs, at the top of which, Her Majesty's postal business was transacted. Mrs. McVicar and the

children were moved across the river to her brother's, in a boat which Alec Trotter had just built.

Jake MacGregor was a Grand Valley man at that time; and, after the McVicar's moved out, he and John Ingram from Montana, sat on the bed and played cards as the water rushed in at the west window and out at the east.

On the Sunday there was no service, such as had been conducted previously out-of-doors by Mr. Roddick with the people sitting in their wagons or on piles of lumber.

In a few days the flood began to subside and Mr. Lee worked in his harness shop, standing in the water without boots or socks, and his pants rolled up to his knees. A fox found its way into the shop and stayed with him a day or two. Thirty men hauled Brownlee's tent back to its place. Later in the season, it was moved to Ninth Street, Brandon, and used for a stable.

Looking back, it is easy to see that Grand Valley could never have been the satisfactory business centre of a city. The flood of the spring of '81 was enough to destroy the hope that made McVicar dream of becoming a millionaire through the sale of lots. Something else had already happened which made inevitable the disappearance of the little town, which suffered from the same malady as destroyed Wolsey and the angels.

Chapter VI
HOW BRANDON CAME TO BE

As far as it can be ascertained, the first description of Brandon was written by Sandford Fleming, before the city was located, indeed before it was decided that the Canadian Pacific Railway would cross the Assiniboine. That piece of history about a city still unborn – not even definitely projected – might well be recounted once a year at some public affair – if not at the fair. It was this way:

It has already been said that the first C.P.R. location crossed the Red River at Selkirk, where a round house was built – it was used over twenty years ago by Wesley Speers, the Government colonisation agent who lived many years at Brandon, to house certain rampageous Doukhobors who believed a shirt collar was excessive clothing for marchers in search of a religious ideal.

The contract for that engine house was let in 1878; when there was already a railway from the boundary at Emerson, to Selkirk. Sixty-five miles of line east to Fort William had been begun, across the river from Selkirk, in 1875. So, during the summer that McVicar went to St. Boniface to meet his wife; and the Roddick brigade was settling, first north-east of Chater, and then in the Brandon Hills, construction of the C.P.R. for one hundred miles west of the Red River was put under contract, and with it a branch down to Winnipeg, on the west side of the Red River. Doesn't it sound foolish that Winnipeg was to be on a branch line?

That hundred miles was to reach the western boundary of Manitoba – and that sounds odd, also, to a generation that knows only the modern province. Manitoba was in very truth the postage stamp province. Its eastern boundary was between Shelley and Whitemouth. Winnipeg Beach and Oak Point are on its northern line. The ninety-ninth degree of longitude – ten miles east of Carberry – was Manitoba's western frontier. The whole area of the province, including the southern portions of Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba, was twenty-two townships by seventeen – altogether 13,500 square miles.

During the summer that Grand Valley was baptised into the family of Her Majesty's Postmaster-General, the C.P.R., like a lion's puling cub, was still half blind. It scarcely knew which way it was going; but was certainly bound for the Yellowhead Pass, as was expecting to go down the Thompson and Fraser valleys to Burrard Inlet, where Vancouver is now shipping prairie wheat to Europe. The location was not favored by British Columbians who dreaded an eclipse of Victoria. But across the plains, at least in Manitoba and what became eastern Saskatchewan, the summer of 1879, and even the spring of 1880 found everything in delightful indecision.

It was settled that Battleford, the infant capital of the North West Territory, must be touched, and therefore the Elbow of the North Saskatchewan must be skirted. But to cross the plains, which were bisected by the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers, was some problem for a frugal engineer like Sandford Fleming, harassed by a Government that had little to spend, and was mortally afraid to spend it in an empty territory that was almost as devoid of votes as a basin is of hair.

So, in that summer of '79, Fleming had several parties in the field, to learn how to get out of Manitoba, and into

the beyond. While Brown and Murdoch were exploring the empty country, trouble developed in the western metropolis. The small, but very conscious city of Winnipeg was on its hind legs, furiously pawing the hot air at being ignored by the Government's transcontinental railway.

St. Boniface had a railway station; and was at least on the main line between Manitoba and Chicago. Winnipeg was to be side-tracked on a branch. The City Council became eruptively active against such an outrage, and cried bitterly to Ottawa that the Red should be bridged in the near vicinity of Portage and Main.

Fleming came west in the early fall, thoroughly inspected the river, learned voluminously from the Catholic Archbishop of St. Boniface and the Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land how disastrous around Fort Garry the spring floods had been in '26, '52 and '64. While brother Roddick was inviting the countryside by prayer, potatoes and a cup of tea, to get ready for the Heavenly City, without thought of any city appearing nearby, Chief Engineer Fleming was writing elaborately to the Government against bridging the Red at Winnipeg. He was also working on this larger report which he didn't finish till the spring thaw was active, and which contains the first prediction of the city of Brandon aforesaid, as an incident of the possible location of the railway farther south than had hitherto been proposed.

Here is the first authentic adumbration of Brandon, buried in the midst of appendix 15 of Sandford Fleming's report, dated April 8th, 1880:-

> Mr. Smith has projected another line diverging from a point near the 8th mile (from the boundary of Manitoba) and taking a south west course which strikes the valley of the Assiniboine a little above Grand Rapids. This would be about 33 miles in

length, across a plain of rich land, on which there are a number of settlements; and construction would be very easy.

I have carefully examined all the data at command, and I think a modification of the latter line points to a scheme worthy the consideration of the Government. If the line be carried to a point in the valley of the Assiniboine, near the mouth of the Little Saskatchewan, where the land remains unsurveyed, and ungranted, there might here be established the site for a city, which would shortly become important.

This extension would be from 50 to 60 miles west of the boundary for Manitoba, and about 150 miles west of the Red River. It would avoid the very elevated ground, east of the Little Saskatchewan, passed over by the other lines, which involves ascending and descending gradients of great length; it would have no heavy adverse gradients from the west; and taken with the sections now under construction would form a trunk line extremely favorable for cheap transportation all the way from Lake Superior to a point commanding a fine agricultural country, and from which desirable colonization lines might, in the near future diverge (1) to the north-west, (2) to the west, and (3) to the south-west; and thus the projected city would become an important railway and business centre.

Mr. Fleming's then idea was to run the main line to the C.P.R. up the Little Saskatchewan and join the route formerly chosen, which was to avoid more expensive crossings of Birdtail Creek, the Assiniboine, and other waterways, on the north-westerly advance to the big Saskatchewan. Without criticising an eminent Canadian,

one cannot help noticing the rather tentative quality of even his most definite recommendations. In this case, he suggests a modification of his surveyor's proposal; for Mr. Murdoch, who was specially detailed to examine the Brandon country, finished his terse recommendation of a southern course:

> Thence, in a south, westerly course, across section 25, to the crossing of the Assiniboine. Thence, in a westerly direction along the side hill, on the south side of the Assiniboine, rising to prairie level in a westerly and southerly direction to the north of Oak Lake.

There you have the first description of the site of the city of Brandon:— "Along the side hill, on the south side of the Assiniboine, rising to prairie level."

Fleming, dreading the expense of bridging so wide a river, saw his city "in the valley of the Assiniboine, near the mouth of the Little Saskatchewan. The laying out of a city at the point mentioned, and the location of stations at regular intervals on other ungranted lands along the line would secure to the Government all the benefit arising from the enhanced price which would be given to the land to assist in meeting the cost of the railway."

Despite Mr. Fleming's eye for economy, and for a government-owned townsite, the city was not to be on the farms that were first broken by Norman and Dan MacMillan; nor was a railway to cross what was destined to be a splendid experimental farm. No city hall was to rise somewhere near where Stott's great barn now is, on the site of Dan MacMillan's original granary; and below the bench whereon stood, for many years, one of the first union churches in this country.

The undiscerned trend of events was against access to the Pacific by the Yellowhead. The Canadian Pacific was to ascend the southern slope of the Assiniboine; to leave Oak Lake a little to the south; and to cross no more considerable rivers until it reached the South Saskatchewan at Medicine Hat, nearly four hundred miles above where the crossing of that river was originally planned, and was later used by the Canadian Northern.

How little, even then, the ultimate course of the great steel highway was known, is clear from the fact that it was not until 1882, when rails were approaching the Foothills, that it was decided that the Selkirks would be pierced by the pass which Major Rogers had that summer discovered, and which bears his name.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it was a long time after the Fleming report of 1880 was written before the people along the Assiniboine knew that the Canadian Pacific was to come their way. Rapid City was to be the business wonder, west of Winnipeg, and its streets were laid out eight miles square. When it was rumoured that the Canadian Pacific would cross the Assiniboine, its inhabitants hoped that Grand Valley would be the principal station in a long stretch of rich country. The prophecy of a city leaked out from the Fleming report; and Grand Valley assumed that Grand Valley was to be it; because, by the time the Fleming recommendation was transformed into blue prints the southern route had won out as against the flanking of the Riding Mountains.

Something tremendous happened in the fall of 1880. Sandford Fleming's reports had all been to the Government; for the Canadian Pacific Railway – then named without the "Canadian" – was a Government project, even as the National Transcontinental was, nearly a quarter of a century later. This governmentality may account for

the rather hesitating tenour of so many of the Fleming recommendations, which, it is a good guess, helped his elimination from the enterprise.

In October, 1880, the contract between the Government and the Smith-Stephen-Hill syndicate, which became the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, was signed. Fleming, "owing to political exigencies," he used to say, retired from the Government service. In February 1881 Parliament ratified the contract, and the construction of the second hundred miles west of the Red River was begun. It had not yet been decided to abandon the northern Yellowhead route, which was still regarded as fundamental to the enterprise; but the change meant that the crossing of the Assiniboine would be at Grand Valley; and the line continued "in a westerly direction, along the side hill, rising to the prairie level," as set out by the prophetic Murdoch. The change from the Yellowhead-North Thompson route was not made till Van Horne became the great dynamo of the unfolding West.

The eager and explosive Van Horne was not yet the general manager of the daring enterprise, which was in charge of Mr. Stickney, afterwards president of the Chicago Great Western. Van Horne, then running the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway, did not take command till New Year's day, 1882; and so was not responsible for the appointment of General Rosser, the townsite expert, after whom Rosser Avenue, Brandon's chief business street, is named. Rosser's engagement was on the understanding that he would be permitted to deal in lots, an evidence of the lower commercial morality of those days. Van Horne fired General Rosser in due course, as he did so many others.

First there were rumours that the line was coming to Grand Valley; then construction approached. McVicar

and the business community got together to request that a station be built at the crossing. Then they conceived that the flat should carry the city, which would supply the great country, north and south. Grand Valley soon had its own real estate boom, beside which the earlier development seemed tame indeed. If Grand Valley's dream had been fulfilled, we should now have a city with its central streets as various in direction as those of European towns. Grand Valley was not built upon the square plan – it just grew, like Topsy, and its second name was Turvey.

Looking back, with the hindsight which always beats foresight, McVicar could see that, for unnumbered future generations it was far better that the city should be built on a hill, and not where recurrent floods might submerge its heart. In the spring of 1881 the water was very high; and even implements were tied to the trees to prevent their meandering down the vale. Passengers left the up-coming boats at Currie's Landing, in their haste to reach Grand Valley. Some west-bound travellers traversed the higher country in the Brandon Hills. One Sunday evening two – A. Johnston and Mr. Wade – drove to Mr. Roddick's house and asked if they could be guided to section twenty-five in township ten, range twenty – they believed it was about two miles west of Grand Valley. Mr. Roddick said he would gladly render the service on Monday, Sunday being no day of profit for this prophet.

Two of the Roddick boys overheard the conversation, and at once concluded that the strangers were concerned in a new townsite, which was already the first subject of discussion through the settlement. They proposed to their reverend father that, as they knew the place thoroughly, he let them drive over and squat on it.

"No," said he, "it would not be honest. Besides, the Roddick family are in the country to live as farmers; and good neighbors are more valuable to us them land."

Wherein spake the true providential pioneer, who, even when he knows it not, chooses the better part by striking his family's roots deep into the soil; and furnishing his country with its most enduring wealth.

The boys went to bed sore at the idea of strangers making, in a few hours, more money out of the country than their fine father and they could make in many years. In the morning the visitors were taken to the hillside; and located what were presently to be known as the Johnston estate, the Vivian estate and the Brock estate in the city of Brandon. In a little while, surveyors were busy on the new-chosen ground, and Grand Valley's future floated down the stream.

The railway's townsite expert, General Rosser, had acquired his title, and nourished his profanity in the Civil War. He chose the name of the infant city from the Brandon Hills, which in turn were called after the Hudson's Bay Company's post, Brandon House – the cellars of which are still traceable on the farm first occupied by Mr. Mair, near the southernmost reach of the Assiniboine, ten miles southeast of the Hills.

By the way, as indicating that some of our first families have quite ancient Manitoba pedigrees, one may say that Mr. McDougall, sergeant-at-arms to the Manitoba Legislature, has written that his late wife's grandmother was daughter of Governor Vincent of the Hudson's Bay Company, and that she was born at Brandon House at the end of the eighteenth century. Governor Vincent was in the West for a short period, having come hither from his headquarters at Fort Albany, in the James Bay hinterland; and his wife tarried at Brandon House, for the event.

Before General Rosser chose and christened Brandon, he had considered Grand Valley. Parliament had ratified the C.P.R. contract in February. In March, General Rosser

was snowshoeing up the projected line.

The southern slope, described by Murdoch, was inspected. Perhaps because the weather was not kind; and Grand Valley was more inviting than open waste; Rosser and his engineering colleague, Shaw, returned to Grand Valley and offered McVicar twenty-five thousand dollars for his townsite. McVicar, surely without consulting the wife who had named the Post Office, immediately demanded fifty-thousand dollars down, with a half interest in all sales.

"I'll be damned if a town of any kind is ever built here," Rosser immediately answered; and, turning on his heel, made straight for the shack of Mr. Adamson, two miles west, on the slope, near where the Roman Catholic church is now, and bought his homestead. Adamson had done some breaking on his quarter section, which is the half-mile square bounded by First Street on the east, Ninth Street on the west; Victoria Avenue on the south and, on the north by a line that wanders through the bushes by the riverside.

That was the real beginning of Brandon, and the death-stroke of Grand Valley.

Chapter VII
WIRING THE PLAIN

People who imagine that, morally, this is an inferior business age to father's time, should compare all sorts of practices in all sorts of businesses then with things that are taboo now – in railroading, for instance. The professional ticket scalper has gone for ever. No longer is it possible for railroad officials to create a spurious fast freight line, so as to make money by giving their own customers preference over the unfavored public. Nowhere could you find a station agent putting over on decent, confiding passengers such a trick as was played on Tom Graves and Samuel Sparks, who came west with me, in the spring of 1882.

The official guardian of a confiding traveling public said that for a dollar he would insure them immunity from customs examination at Sarnia – itself an evidence of the ease with which it was assumed bribery would work. My friends – for some reason he did not try this game on me – had nothing that they needed to conceal. Our tickets shewed that we had paid good money to travel from one part of Canada to another. Our faces told that we were up to no knavish tricks.

But we were young, green travellers, and Sparks had a piece of baggage which he did not want to become an inconvenience. He would have no money to spare when he arrived on the plains; but he was sure he was going to have a homestead, on which he would soon build a house for himself. Always having lived in the woods he expected the prairie to furnish lots of logs. So he brought a cross-cut

saw, screwed into a coffin-like box, with which to trim the corners off his domicile.

At Sarnia Sam's dollar did not save him from customs officers' examination. With all the rest of the baggage the cross-cut saw sarcophagus was dumped on the platform, opened, and duly inspected.

The last I saw of Saw-box Sam was in Winnipeg, where he was pushing his baggage up Main Street on a wheelbarrow. He never homesteaded. In a few weeks he found the corners of western life generally so obtrusive that, instead of wearing them down or sawing them off, he wrote home for his fare to the East, saying he would rather work hard around Kingston than to become rich in Winnipeg. His father sold a cow, to bring the wanderer home.

It was six days' journey from Kingston to Winnipeg, where we arrived on a Sunday. The boom was raging and accommodation was at a premium. I put up at a miserable hotel on Main Street, where the Union Bank later built its skyscraper, and paid two dollars for a night in a chair.

My first job was dis-barking telegraph poles with a draw knife. As hundreds of boys, having no money with which to take boom-flyers, were looking for work, perhaps I was lucky to get something to do on the second day after arrival. Nearly every other door in the city was of a real estate office. All sorts of bargains were offered – at least they seemed to be bargains alongside the description of the future which we were freely given by vendors who appeared to be fuller of faith than the multitude was of cash. Rapid City, for some reason, was still a favorite among the futures, though the C.P.R. main line had passed it by. It was sure to run Winnipeg a close race – perhaps because of its name. At auction lots within its ample frontiers sold for more than they have ever brought since.

Its population at the 1921 census was five hundred and seventy.

Skinning telegraph poles was a preliminary to wiring them. I acquired a place in the gang that was to go to railhead, and string wires all summer. C.P.R. headquarters were over the Bank of Montreal. The cynics said the location was doubly appropriate, as the director's function for so long was to get into the Bank of Montreal. Van Horne was there; but he did not engage the telegraph wiremen. We received our commissions from our impending foremen, James Crawford, now engineer in the Western Canada Flour Mills, at Winnipeg, and Archie Jack, whose family are still in Winnipeg.

Twenty-eight of us left Winnipeg in a box car bound for the end of the line at Flat Creek, afterwards more happily named Oak Lake. We were twenty-four hours covering the hundred and thirty-two miles to Brandon. The reason for this seeming slowness lay in the extreme haste with which everything was happening on the C.P.R. that spring.

When Van Horne took over the general managership of New Year's day, nothing was in the prairie country for the coming season's construction. He had promised his directors that he would lay five hundred miles of track on the prairie section during his first year. He brought rails from England by New York and New Orleans, so as to beat the St. Lawrence ice.

There was no railroad around Lake Superior. The C.P.R. was not even through from Port Arthur to Winnipeg. To have any chance of doing his five hundred miles, Van Horne had to get ahead of navigation on the Lakes, and resume construction on the plains as soon as the frost was gone. For a seasonable start, train-loads of material had to come up the Mississippi Valley, through St. Paul, and then over the track that was laid the preceding summer across

the Assiniboine. There was, therefore, the greatest rush of material over a new line that had ever happened.

Full trains went to Flat Creek and empty trains came back. Settlers also flocked into the country, as soon as spring began to shew her face. And such a spring! The Valley of the Red above, as well as below Winnipeg, was inundated. The Portage Plains were under water. The unavoidable delays in getting material to the front cut off many miles from the possibilities of the five hundred stunt.

As we came near Portage la Prairie in our freight train, it seemed as though we were traversing the ocean. Quite a few pedestrians were following the track – there was nothing else which Shanks's pony could travel. One of our mischievous travellers had a big syringe, which he filled with water and squirted it over the cursing trampers as we passed them. This apostle of mischief was the cook and, strange to relate, the Fred Kyde who had joined Alec Trotter in the Minnedosa country, three years before.

We did not count the ox-teams we saw mired. At Portage station a bread wagon was stuck deep in the mud; and its driver was trying to induce his horse to haul it out backwards. I see that worried baker every time I pass that highly-stationed spot.

Nobody who saw Brandon in its infancy ever forgot the spectacle. When we pulled into the station, a block east of where it is now, the hillside was littered with tents. Water was running down every place that could serve the office of a drain. We stayed at Brandon most of the day. The temporary bridge at Grand Valley had been replaced by a permanent structure, and we put a new wire across it. Then one wire carried all the business between the whole world and the Western Canadian prairies. Now sixty wires cross the C.P.R. bridge over the Assiniboine.

Grand Valley was a living corpse. The few buildings were forlorn. The business that was still being done with settlers who could get what they wanted without going to the saucier, more distant place on higher ground, made a noise like a death rattle. The C.P.R. had refused to stop trains there.

Before finishing the ride to Flat Creek, we explored the tent-strewn town. My earliest recollection of the city in which I have made my home for nearly forty-three years is of a musical community in cotton and wool – music because somebody was playing on the violin "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and somebody else was scraping "Home Sweet Home;" cotton because of the tents; and wool because of the memory of the first auction sales I ever saw within Brandon.

As I came up the hill, old Mr. Flinn was in a tent on the corner of Sixth Street and Rosser Avenue, shouting for bids for a shirt, and vowing that it was "All wool from Paisley; and who the hell would go naked?" Not far away a Mr. Ferguson was on a big stone auctioning other articles of attire. Everybody afterwards came to know him as Fergie, a name which has not been witheld from his nephew, the Premier of Ontario.

For the rest, Brandon was a collection of firsts – the first of almost everything was still on the ground.

When we arrived at the end of the steel, it seemed to us that Flat Creek was the repository of more railway material that the whole world contained. It was piled up everywhere, for apparently interminable distances. But, of course, as the season's work had begun on the to-be-graded plain ahead, we did not see more than a fraction of the activity that Van Horne had hurled into the Great Lone Land of the previous year.

In the main the grading to be done was light, until the dip into Moose Jaw, which was two hundred and twenty

miles away; and where, when we strung wire near-by in late summer, Strevill's store-tent flapping in the wind was the only object to break the stillness where that city is today; then, of course, unrecognizable and unnamed.

Travelling nowadays you see that great changes C.P.R. location have been made; reducing ascents and curves. Though Van Horne seemed to spend money like a whole navy of drunken sailors, economical construction was a great objective. The road, until prosperity came, near the end of the century, was far more like a switchback is some of the rolling country than branch lines are today.

Speed was Van Horne's first objective; and the thousands of teams and men who had gone on ahead to make the way straight for rails and ties, would have given Flat Creek an aspect of tremendous business, if they had all marshaled there like a military army that could only move when it was ready to start all together.

The contractors were Langdon and Shephard, experienced railroad builders of St. Paul. On the day after their contract was signed they advertised for three thousand men and four thousand horses. Altogether, five thousand men and seventeen hundred teams were working to fulfil Van Horne's boast that he would lay five hundred miles of track before freeze-up.

We of the telegraphic proletariat were a microscopical portion of the numerical whole; but we could boast of being in the intelligence department. It was our job to keep up with track-laying, so that the bosses in the eastward positions, and as much of the world as they chose to tell, could know exactly who were where; and what was what.

We began work the morning after reaching Flat Creek. Post-hole excavation was my allotted modicum in a work that was to make Canada famous. The foreman gave me a seven-foot crowbar, and as long a spoon for scooping up

the soil the crowbar broke. I was to dig five-foot holes with these romantic aids to Canadian history, for two dollars a day and board.

Back home, I had regarded myself as the rising representative of a well-to-do family. A gold ring was on one of my fingers. It started bravely with the rest of me digging holes in this waterlogged plain. It seemed to be a sort of talisman of self-respect when I began to jab the virgin soil; but other reflections intruded upon a contemplative vanity.

For awhile it was a sorry adventure, mentally as well as physically. So much of the spring freshet was still above the ground that, even with a railway tie to stand on, as a defence against rheumatism and catarrh, every thrust with the bar brought a splash of mud to the face. My precious ring was scratched by the cruel iron as my hand slid over it. I began to think of home, and friends and sociability – of the swell times preceding a farewell that would have deserved generous notice in the society column, if such there then had been.

Home looked as good to me as it did to Sam Sparks whom I had last seen wheeling his coffined saw on Winnipeg Main Street. Homesickness may not be exactly a virtue; but it is at least evidence that the humanities survive. Being a reaction, it sometimes produces other most excellent reactions. During the war one heard of a conscripted farm boy who, never having slept away from the parental roof, wept copiously the first five nights after he had donned His Majesty's uniform. He became the goriest fighter of his battalion. It was said of him that he could wade through slaughter to a dugout, and be perfectly happy in the knowledge that he was making German lives pay for robbing him of all the comforts of being where mother could tuck him in.

My homesickness and sorrow for myself as a post-hole digger soon parted company. Recalling that I was in the West of my own choice, I put the ring in my pocket and my pride with it; and life brightened immediately, if the mud splashes didn't.

The work of a telegraph gang was not picturesque, but it was useful, if somewhat monotonous. We liked to think that we set up four miles of insulated wire posts every day; but the stern facts of C.P.R. history are against that, as they are against the other comforting delusion of our nautical contemporaries that the Assiniboine from Winnipeg to Fort Pelly was twelve hundred miles long.

I stayed almost six months on this job. If we averaged four miles every working day – six a week – we should have done six hundred miles. Gull Lake, where, in October, with several others I forsook two dollars a day and board, is 379 miles from Oak Lake; and the total mileage lad on the main line that year was four hundred and seventeen – and Van Horne's five hundred was achieved by reckoning one hundred miles of track put down on the southwestern branch out of Winnipeg.

Usually, the track laid per diem was between two and three miles – which was remarkable enough, all things considered, whether for laying track or stringing wire. As the conditions surrounding this great piece of construction can never be repeated, it may be worth while to say more about them.

The period was only twenty-five years after the completion of the Grand Truck between Montreal and Toronto. Appliances were not as labor-saving as they are now. The wheelbarrow, an abundant aid to grading in the Brassey days, and not now used on the regular business of dirt-shifting, was still employed to finish embankments.

Perhaps the principal advance in methods is in the

actual of getting rails on to the ties. Then, as now, the ties were hauled by teams from the rear to the front of the construction train, and put into place. But then, not as now, the rails were thrown off the flat cars, half a mile of them in heaps, and the stalwart gentry of the navvying profession, twelve men to a rail, would carry them up the bank and place them on hand cars. They were then pushed ahead to the last laid pair and carried into position.

Nowadays, the rails repose on a flat car with an equipment run by steam from the locomotive, for carrying them out front-stage, as it were, and dropping them onto the ties. They having been spiked down and jointed by fishplates with a couple of bolts, the train advances another rail length, over steel which, a few minutes before, was riding on the car.

The most I have heard of as a day's tracklaying in this modern fashion is seven miles, which was done on the Canadian Northern – as was a stunt more than it was a day's work. Incredible as it may sound, I have seen a quarter of a mile of track laid in thirty-five minutes by the antiquated method – also as a stunt.

On the actual tracklaying, three hundred men were busy. They boarded and slept in rough-and-ready pullmans, having mostly three decks of bunks. The telegraphers camped in tents; and moved their gear forward every afternoon on hand cars and established free communication between the end of the steel and headquarters, with an instrument fastened to a spike box, so that messages could freely be sent during the night; and in the morning there would be as perfect connection as possible between the first base of that day's tracklaying and the head office in Winnipeg.

At noon we tramped back to camp for dinner; so that altogether we walked the total mileage thrice. In these less quiet times an almost universal question is "How many

miles on a gallon of gas?" In our more toilsome days an important problem was "How many miles can you walk in a pair of socks?" Under average conditions, a pair that had borne the heat and feet of the day for a hundred miles had done their bit for the onward march of civilization. We were not addicted to darning. Sometimes we lengthened hosen life by turning the heel around to the instep.

We had other concerns besides getting a fair day's work out of a fair pair of socks. The social side of railroad construction is a fit subject for the student of mass and isolated psychology. On the whole, one would say that, in intelligence, our gang was above the average of railway construction gangs. Men changed jobs frequently. Of the twenty-eight who left Winnipeg, only half a dozen were together when the nights again grew cold.

Few, if any of us were historically minded enough to think of the interest that might attach to a running diary of what was seen, and said, and done, from day to day. We talked a good deal about what would follow in our wake – the towns that would appear, and the sort of population that would spread over the illimitable plain. Our forecasts would probably make as amusing reading today as the prophecies of wiser men do, when the wise men are where they don't hear how foolish they were. We enjoyed the life, as you would expect men busy in physical labor to enjoy the wonderful atmosphere; the open space; the zest with which the whole scheme was prosecuted; the barbarian who came to behold us putting the enemy of uncommercial distance under our feet.

When spring had nicely melted into summer we were off the soggy levels that had made Oak Lake and Virden little better than quagmires; and were on the rolling ground and lighter soils of the most westerly addition to Manitoba, and the infant District of Eastern Assiniboia. Wild ducks

abounded. In May the search for their eggs was oft rewarded. As June came in the advent of fluffy families, swimming cutely behind their mothers, on stream and slough, was a delight to the eye. When the poplars were in full leaf, the wolf willows gave their own delightful fragrance to the evening air.

The profusion of flowers, though not of the luxuriance that embellished the prairiescape away down in Iowa, gave a never-ending brightness to the carpet of grass, exactly like that through which, only yesterday the multitudinous buffalo laid their marches and reveled in their wallows. The prairie wind could be unkind; and the cool of the evening was sometimes too cool. There were cloudy days, and, occasionally rain; and occasionally, hail.

After all, there is nothing like this northern summer. If any desire a more witching hour than that in which the sun curtains himself, sometimes behind a veritable field of cloth of gold, across which the wild fowl fly against the night; and sometimes beneath clouds that seem to warn that life cannot always be warmed at glowing fires – if such eventides do not satisfy the most voracious hungerer for beauty and the rarest magic of repose; he must surely remain unsatisfied so long as he remains among mortal men.

But we were not awestruck, rapturous observers of the departing sun. Our visions of the future were perforce woven out of the realities of the present, some of which were perilous, and all of which were more informing than we fully understood.

One afternoon it was my turn to remain after dinner to pack up for the camp advance. The stove, pots, pans, groceries and supplies were loaded on to one hand car; and the tents, blankets, and packs of all sorts – the furnishings of our Arabian abodes – were put on another.

Two men were pushing each car, when a train came up in a hurry – a special train, traveling at an astounding speed on the new-laid, unballasted rails. The engineer whistled fiercely. We up-ended the second car, with its load; and were making for the first, then the grind of a reversed engine was right upon us; and the only way to save our lives was to abandon the piled-up car.

From behind a telegraph pole I saw the cowcatcher strike the car; hurl stove, utensils, pails of applesauce and butter into the air. When all was still the engineer descended from his car, and cursed us illimitably – why, it did not appear, since it was he who had done the damage. Some of his passengers joined in his displeasure – one particularly – but I think we made as much fun as the circumstance warranted; and asked: "Why the haste on such a track?"

Van Horne was frequently at the front, whence we would drive into the emptiness; and would amuse himself and onlookers in the evenings by making sketches and telling yarns. The language which came from that passenger train was worthy of him at his best – a best which his biographer mildly summarises as "a vocabulary of picturesque vituperation;" and which the Winnipeg Sun faintly sketched:—

"Van Horne is calm and harmless-looking. So is a she-mule; and so is a buzz-saw. You don't know their true inwardness until you go up and feel them. To see Van Horne get out of the car softly and go up to the platform you would think he was an evangelist on his way West to preach temperance to the Mounted Police. But you are soon undeceived. If you are within hearing distance you will have more fun than you ever had in your life before."

For most of the distance wherever we worked that summer settlers were an accompanying stream to the steel and wire. Oxen were their locomotives; and sometimes, it

seemed as if they made tracks just about as fast as we did – and no faster. That summer produced also a phase of land settlement, on which events have somewhat severely commented.

One of the ablest, staunchest westerners yet produced was Mr. S. A. Bedford who began and for eighteen years superintended the Experimental Farm across the river, just west of Brandon. English-born, he came to Canada as a boy. Beginning in 1877, he was one of the largest and most sucessful Manitoba farmers, and the Canada North West Land Company which had bought 2,500,000 acres from the C.P.R. engaged him to superintend the selection of sections.

Two and a half million acres mayn't look much on the map of Canada, but it is nearly four thousand square miles. A real selection of so many sections was a big job, which was done in a big way. Mr. Bedford organized it thoroughly. He sent out about a hundred men, in camps of twelve, who worked between Winnipeg and Calgary. He kept personal charge as far as Moose Jaw, and his assistant, W.A. Ducker directed the examination between Moose Jaw and Calgary. Each man inspected two sections per day, giving close attention to twenty acres in each, and taking copious notes, to be transcribed in winter.

The net result of this unique prospecting, it has always been understood, was a recommendation that land for wheat-growing west of Moose Jaw was not a good buy. The Moose Jaw limit coincided with the beginning of Mr. Ducker's territory, but there was more in it than that coincidence. The most accurate surveys of the West shew that beyond Moose Jaw the land begins to rise more rapidly, towards the mountains. The influence of the Chinook winds is said to reach as far east as Moose Jaw, and no farther. The Chinook is widely regarded as a sort of ranchers'

guardian. The idea was prevalent that the farther West was intended for ranching. Anyway, though grain elevators are plentiful west of Moose Jaw, and south-west Saskatchewan happens just now to be one of the most flourishing sections of the greatest wheat-growing province, the belief about the Bedford report spread, and for many years incoming settlers heard, as if from the mount, that the limit of chancy wheat growing was Moose Jaw – and, it was freely said, it ought to have been Regina.

As we passed through the country the temptation to look for townsites to be owned did not exist. It was understood that a mile each side of the line was reserved for the C.P.R., who, anyway, decided where towns should be. But at Broadview, some of our crowd did take a day off to look for homesteads which turned out to be mostly water. We came to a big snake-like slough; and to avoid a detour, we stripped and waded across, carrying clothes overhead. When this had happened several times we lost interest in homesteads; and returned to our wiry base.

One of our crowd, though, did have, and tried to dissemble, a love for land. He was a middle-aged Irishman who was too pious to do any work on Sundays, even the wardrobe and other repairs that were usually accomplished on that auspicious day. But his eye was always skinned for a fine piece of grass; and we discerned that his Sabbath walks for meditation were also for observation. On a Sunday evening he did not appear for the customary sing-song, and we were discussing whether to search for him in the dark, when his approach was odoriferously heralded. He walked into camp carrying a skunk by the tail; and innocently inquired for its name.

I was very glad, that night, to have a private tent with Sam Edmonds, now owner of the Model Laundry in Winnipeg; and to be able, in comparative freedom from

oppression to recall the innocence of a newly-arrived Teuton on a surveying party who, being awakened at midnight and smelling a very near and very eruptive skunk, held his nose as long as he could, while also he heard the sonorous breathing of his tent-mates; and then cried aloud:

"Dey shleeps und I vakes; und I haf got to shmell ALL of it."

Probably the Indians who flocked to gaze upon the wonder of the iron horse were less numerous than we supposed. But they seemed to be always around; and always curious, though remarkably silent. The noble red man exhibited little of the romantic grandeur with which youthful reading had invested him. The age of scalping was past; though plenty of men in the camp would not have dared to venture a mile away in broad daylight lest something fatal would befall their locks.

There was really no danger; though the second Riel rebellion was still only three years in the future; and the next summer construction brought a serious risk to the racial peace, thanks to the neglect of politicians to keep the Queen's word. The Government had agreed to extinguish the Indians' title to any land in their reserves required by the C.P.R., but had failed so to do.

The first rails laid on Chief Crowfoot's reserve were torn up in the night; and the young braves were full of threatenings and slaughter. A rising was averted by the tact of Father Lacombe, the Indians' friend and the whites' wise counsellor – a piece of diplomacy which made him president of the C.P.R., for an hour, when the directors came through, and held a meeting in Van Horne's car, at which Stephen resigned and the priest was elected.

All who have had any friendly contact with the Indians many years ago will know that at first they did not believe what they heard about the iron horse that breathed vast

amounts of smoke. Indians came to see railway construction to appease their skepticism. They watched everything, and scarcely said anything. The squaws would shew the marvels to their papooses. They sat down and pulled their shawls over their head in terror of the whistle, and confessed their fears by refusing to cross bridges. They were not afraid to walk on the right of way so long as the walking was on dry ground. But coming to a stream they would wade it, with the water even to their armpits, rather than risk the perils of trestle and tie.

For them, the safety of the strange, big traverse must be of the earth, earthy. Toward the mysteries of the new and awesome trail, the squaws were just as brave as the braves. We had one very interesting visit from Chief Piapot and his band. Their interest was perhaps less evoked by the engine than by one lesser marvel of the track. They had heard of the horse that was fed with fire; but they knew nothing of how enormous trains could travel two ways on the same set of rails. The switches they could not understand. They examined them carefully with eyes and feet. Touch them with their hands they would not.

Chapter VIII
REGINA'S FIRST WINTER

Probably the strike of telegraph wirestringers at Gull Lake was the first concerted rebellion against labor conditions between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains. But, in truth, it was not much of a strike. The fall rains were unpleasant; the nights were getting cold; we had had a heavy season's work, and were ready for a change, anyhow. We didn't expect to get more money; but figured the chance was worth taking. The C.P.R. refused our demand; and we were free to face the world.

We packed our belongings; and, in little bands straggled east. Sometimes we were on freight cars; sometimes on foot. Having decided to try western city life, I arrived in Regina alone, in the evening; and set up my little tent north of the track, close to the station; got some straw from a box car on the siding, and slept.

The first thing visible in the morning was a man being kicked out of a dining tent close by; the kicker being Fred Kyde, who had tired of, or was fired from being our cook up the line. He was running a restaurant of his own and doing well, as a man should who was resourceful enough to hand whiskey on a traveling pair of horns.

After breakfast, Kyde asked me to help him get some stuff out of a car. Something made me ask if it was whiskey we were moving. He confessed that it was; and, being strictly mindful of a good temperance training, I had no more to do with that.

This enterprising restaurateur kept his case of whiskey under the box which served for a wash-sink; and did much business – illegally, of course; for in the early years of settlement of the North West Territories, a special brand of prohibition was in operation, if it was not always in force. My friend soon afterwards was so heavily fined that he went out of business. Unless a man has a positive genius for law-breaking, where money is plentiful, it scarcely ever seems worth while to facilitate the passion so many seem to have to get unnecessary and harmful liquor.

There was no Regina when we passed that way towards the end of July. If anybody had told us that the middle of this billiard-tabled, gumboed plain was the site of the capital of a territory as big as France, Italy and Germany, we would have thought him daft.

The common idea then was that the new capital, to replace Battleford, was to be at Qu'Appelle, where the country was pleasant to look upon, with its poplar bluffs and duckponds. It was even reported that originally the railway was to skirt the wonderful valley of the river, near the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, and by the Lakes which give a singular beauty to a scenery that is more impressive than the Assiniboine Valley, at Brandon itself.

But it was not to be. Trouble arose, it is said, with the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Dewdney, who did not see why he should not serve himself with a townsite, as well as serve the Queen, and finally it was decided to make the capital where it is. That gumbo plain certainly was lifeless enough as we strung our copper wires across it. There was not a bush on which a bird could take a rest. A touring rabbit, one of our fellows said, would have to carry all his lunch with him. Water was invisible, for mile after mile; in the midst of summer.

However, before October and our strike came, Regina

was the capital of the North West Territories, and so I found it. Proof of the apparently casual way in which decisions of great importance to vast areas and incalculable populations are taken, was evident in the fact that the city was not surveyed, even in the fall. Founders of what were expected to be great mercantile houses were in a squatters' class all their own.

Still, real estate was the order of the day, and the discussion of the night. Buildings were going up across from where the station raised its modest but aspiring head. None of them was cellared, or bolted down; and there were more tents than stronger structures. Having a few dollars, and being on the look-out for a future I decided to join the big fellows, establish a real estate business; and to begin by a demonstration in kind.

Three hundred yards from the station was a slightly rising piece of ground, which, mindful of the splashing woes of springtime, digging post-holes at Flat Creek, seemed to offer the best available defence against freshets. Cornwall Street, it appeared, was the thoroughfare which was destined to facilitate commerce to this inviting spot; and I decided to build an establishment on Cornwall Street – the very same which still connects the railway with the Park in the centre of the capital, around which several noble churches and other fine buildings devoted to the public weal now minister to a spacious civic pride.

I bought a load of lumber; paid a man a dollar to haul it the chosen, but undelimited lot; and set about building the nucleus of the great business that would probably take the form of Beecham Trotter Limited – limited only by an ambition which itself had no certain bound. Twelve feet by sixteen seemed to leave room for an expansion which, it was to be hoped, would not be thrust too soon or too furiously upon me.

Architect of my own fortunes I was also author and finisher of the plans for this epoch-making, and fortune-making edifice. The most visible feature of the exterior was tar paper. The interior distinction was the partition which was to divide the privacy of slumber from the publicity of business. The outer door had a white knob, which ministered to a calculating vanity. A latch would look like a shanty. A knob suggested an office. The partition door was of a wide board's width; and hung on leather hinges, gotten from a pair of shoes that had had their day and ceased to be.

The last triumph of constructional efficiency was a four-light window, each pane being seven by ten inches. The roof was gently sloping, all one way; and when I came to erect a box stove it was plain that the piping available would not pierce the slope. So, the stove had to be reared on bricks which, in those days, could not be purchased, but might be obtained.

At last, the floor was down, the stove was up, a lamp was bought, and an Eastern lad in the West had his very own home, wherein he could dream of the girl he'd left behind him. For over half a year he had known no other floor than mother earth. Now he could walk upon his own expanse of boards, every creak of which was music to a ravished ear.

When the lamp was first aglow he stepped forth into the street, and surveyed two bewitching spectacles. The first was Railway Street, running east and west, whereon the lights from stores and through tents gave a glow to a scene which will be forever memorable to one beholder. Nothing more illuminating than kerosene was within hundreds of miles. But kerosene, in an infant capital, that has hardly acquired even its swaddling clothes, may furnish the very effulgence of illumination. It was almost cruelly dazzling

on Railway Street, Regina, capital of the North West Territories, so named in honor of the great Queen by the great Queen's son-in-law, who had been Governor-General of Canada.

But Railway Street was nothing to the blaze of Cornwall Street, the lone homester's city address. On Cornwall Street were four panes of glass, seven inches by ten every one; and through each of them streamed the light that never was on land or sea. The more he gazed the more the glory grew – and sleep was an unwilling jade when at last the splendour of the night had been dimmed.

Tar paper, which is far more tar than paper, may have a healthy aroma; but it cannot soothe an exalted or troubled breast; any more than it can bring customers to a real estate office that has no real estate. The vision engendered by a palace that had cost sixty-four dollars, exclusive of the architect's and builder's unreckoned fees, did not survive the first natural inquiry that followed so courageous an enterprise.

A lot on Cornwall Street, I learned was priced at four hundred dollars by a rapacious C.P.R. It was more than lots in that near neighborhood brought during twenty succeeding years; and it seemed to a practical young man that it would be better to invest his spare capital in something alive – a yoke of oxen, say, which could at once earn money, hauling water for more reckless adventurers.

Along came a man by the name of Simpson, with a suggestion that really put me in the capitalistic, the rentier class. If I would buy a horse and rig, he would hire it for three dollars a day, and sell Wascana water to the town at fifty cents a barrel. Behold, then, the first horse this real estate aspirant ever owned; bought at the instigation of Mr. Simpson. He was a white-faced bay; not too big, not too spirited, not too young; but a perfect mate for the

somewhat mature democrat wagon that went with him and the harness for a hundred and ten dollars the lot. He was to dwell on the other side of my partition; and, by shewing daily that one barrel of water or five on the wagon made no difference to his pace, he was to live up to the story of his connection with royalty, which was thrown in with the bargain he was represented to be.

In sober fact, this steed was surely the only one in all the spacious West about which one royal and one semi-royal legend floated with more persistence than confirmation. The first romance of my pony, as told me, was that he had drawn the Marquis and Marchioness of Dufferin across the plains when they made their vice-regal journey to British Columbia. As the Dufferins never crossed the untrailed mountains to British Columbia, the distinction of white-face died a natural death.

His other claim to immortality was that he had done a like kindness to the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise during their reign at Rideau Hall. This honor, likewise, is unconfirmed; and may be put among the might-have-beens. But he was a distinguished member of his race, for the rest of them never even had these high and distinguished imputations attached to their cayusey names. A cynical friend, to whom these romantic allegations about my first horse were confided, said: "Beech; he sure was the nearest to royalty you ever got."

It was not enough for ambition to subsist on the revenue from a cayuse, even though it was a shadow of things to come. The next best thing to selling real estate that wasn't surveyed, was to survey some. The city was being correctly defined by a party under Mr. Walsh, with which I secured employment at two dollars a day and board. Mr. Walsh was a fine old man, who detested rough talk; and gave no encouragement to those who were addicted to it.

Experience on the telegraph corps may have been a good training for laying out streets and lots. At all events I seemed to suit him very well; and he appreciated quickness in answering his signals while the mark was being found; and speed in driving the stake. He visited my residence, and was much amused at the menage in which the gubernatorial pony figured. For Regina, he predicted a great city; and, for me, a wife on the spot where I had inaugurated bachelor's hall.

My smartness in picking a slightly rising piece of ground went for naught. When we worked across to Cornwall Street my location was found to be in the middle of the street; so that if the price of four hundred dollars had not frightened me, the boundary line might. The spot was directly behind where the Kings Hotel now is. Nobody would ever suspect that so open a place could have once been the site of a young man's golden dreams of wealth and fame.

The weather became cold in November; but we stuck to our job till the eighteenth of December, when Mr. Walsh was good enough to consult me as to quitting for the winter. Altogether thirteen thousand lots were laid out; and, as the event proved, they were plenty for nearly a quarter of a century. The, when the boom came, it made millionaires, some of whom lost their millions.

When I left for Winnipeg to be paid off, being furnished with a return pass by my chief and friend, it was with the firm belief that Regina, the capital of the North West Territories, where already the Mounted Police Barracks were being built to the west of the townsite; and a railway roundhouse was going up on the eastern suburb, would rival Winnipeg.

Looking back, it is easy to see that, unless miracles of immigration happened, so vast a country could not

immediately be filled with enough farmers to require vast cities to serve them, or hordes of Government employees to teach them how to farm. Everything was promising in the land of promise; and I left my gallant steed, Dufferin-and-Lorne, with the ambitious Simpson, and feeling every inch a city man, went to the larger city for a Christmas visit.

In the spring we had been hired in offices over the Bank of Montreal. In the late fall Van Horne threw an unfinished cigar into his waste-paper basket, which set fire to the building, and compelled bank and railway to go elsewhere. The only available quarters were Knox Church; and there I was paid. Van Horne had just moved to Montreal, leaving what had been a very comfortable office in the pastor's vestry. Whether there he exercised his "vocabulary of picturesque vituperation" his biographer does not say. Probably he did not, for, looking back on his life he was able to say with perfect sincerity, and a rebuke to a ribald friend, that his religion was to practise the Golden Rule, and he was the only business man who did it.

The auditor reigned in the Sunday School, sitting on the superintendent's platform. The bank used the auditorium of the church – not the first time a temple had been appropriated by the money changers.

Winnipeg had few attractions; and at Christmastime I was back at my own city address. It was a bitterly cold homecoming in the dark. The only heat since I left had come from the equine side of the establishment, the advantage of which was that some of the cracks were filled with the rime from the pony's congealing breath. It isn't exhilarating to court sleep in such a building, without fire or light. One did the best he could do with an imagination which was still hopeful that the road to glory was paved with deals in real estate.

Next day, one's natural readiness for friendship was exercised with agreeable promise of success. With an Englishman and Scotsman it became possible to found a firm of realtors. Smith, the Englishman, had taught school; was a well-spoken, agreeable sort of man, who seemed likely to attract English investors in property that was sure to increase vastly and swiftly in value. MacPherson was experienced in the real estate world; though he did not at once confide the story to us.

He was a big fellow, with, dark, flashing eyes, and a black, drooping moustache. He made five thousand dollars in Winnipeg real estate in 1880. Instead of there turning it into fifty thousand, he conceived a faith in the immediate expansion of Portage la Prairie; and put all his money into lots there.

But Brandon soon put the Portage's nose out of joint; and our friend, whose optimism had survived his illusion, had come to the farther West, hoping to repeat his Winnipeg success. Being Scotch, he was instinctively regarded by his partners as a watchdog of the treasury – and probably would have been if there had been a treasury to watch. What the Englishman and the Scotsman saw in the Irish-Canadian the Irish-Canadian never knew.

Smith and MacPherson had better living rooms than mine; so I sold the water-vending equipment, joined with them, and Smith, MacPherson and Trotter, operators in real estate, were ready to do business with the world. But the world wasn't ready to do business in the far-below zero weather. Our spirits went down almost as rapidly as the thermostat did after sunset. Our optimism lasted three days. Our shingle was up three weeks. We all became railroaders, while living together in the quarters where we had foreseen so much, and had foregathered so little.

That was a very hard winter, anyhow; and the haste with which the C.P.R. had been laid across the plain seemed to make it harder. From Indian Head to Moose Jaw – eighty-five miles – there was no water supply beside the track; and the C.P.R. thanked Providence for snow. Any boy who had supplied drink to an elephant, on any old homesteader who had carried snow into his wash-boiler on a forty-below day, to assuage his oxen's thirst, knows what prodigies of labor may be spent for poverties of result.

The lot of these leaders in the real estate world – leaders into the wilderness, if you please – was similar to the experience of the elephant attender and the homestead snowmelter. We shovelled snow from the drifts alongside the track beside which the engine stood, into the tender, wherein it was changed into water by a steam jet from the boiler, controlled by a man who stood on top of the tender and turned our more erratic shovelsful into the place where they were aimed.

The severity of the experience was moderated to us by what were then considered pretty fair wages; but it was grueling, all the same, to move so much snow for so little water. In a way, it is much pleasanter to shovel snow off the track than into the tender; for you can see a growing rampart of white crystals for your trouble; and presently a train majestically goes through where no engine could stir, all because of your shovel-work.

One day we had been to Pilot Butte, to clear the cut of drift; and after terrific toil were coming west in a work-car, in which, piled near the stove, was much beef raised in the Qu'Appelle Valley, and cut into hard-frozen steaks. The sight was good to the junior partner of the real estate firm that had gone into suspended animation. Meat was thirty cents a pound in the butcher shops, and it was being weakly bought, weekly. In those extremely distant days there was

a certain camaraderie as between employers and employed; which expressed itself in the borrowing of lumps of coal on specially cold sundowns. Here were steaks conveniently stiff for unpacked transport. The junior partner and his ample overcoat were soon where they were; and some of them were soon where the overcoat was. It was worth the experience – to get the gratitude of comrades whose views of the partnership of capital and labor were equally adaptable to the existing standards of western hospitality.

We enjoyed that meal more than a diner in a Scotch restaurant did, whom MacPherson used as an example of how differently things might happen about table. In a tavern in Edinburgh town a caller had a meal of chicken, with whisky to match. The waiter was unusually solicitous for comment on the repast. Chicken all right? Whisky of good flavor? The guest answered monosyllabically several queries; until it dawned on him that a tip was being sought; whereon he said: "The dinner would have been very fine if your whisky had been as old as your chicken and your chicken had been as young as your whisky."

Hibernating on the uncropped prairie, on a main transcontinental line, that had not yet been ballasted for traffic, and in the unequipped capital of a vacant country, would have been a rather forlorn experience, but for the liveliness of the newspaper which Nicholas Flood Davin began at that time; and in which his buoyancy never failed. He was the incurable – perhaps the unjustifiable – optimist, always spirited, sometimes spirituous.

All the news that filtered into Regina may not have been authentic – indeed, perhaps the most interesting of all that passed around was typically erroneous. During the winter we heard that a pass through the Selkirk Mountains had been found by a young C.P.R. engineer, named Armstrong; and that the railway company, otherwise the fabulous

Van Horne, had rewarded him with twenty-five thousand dollars.

The story and the name made a deep impression on me. It seemed as if we all must be on the verge of kindred conquests; and the infected hearer of great news saw himself overcoming mountains, fording torrents; cleaving highways through the everlasting hills; and belonging generally to the race of modern giants. Imagination, at least, wasn't frozen; nor was it shovelled into the steaming tender with the snow.

It was long before one knew more exactly what had happened about the mountain road. The decision to abandon the northern route across the plains, which was to traverse the Yellowhead Pass, through which the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific lines were built thirty years later, had been finally taken after Van Horne was engaged. It was his idea to enter the sea of mountains by the Kicking Horse Pass, to be reached by ascent of the Bow, passing Fort Calgary in the foothills. He wanted to save 125 miles in route, and acquire untold assets in scenery.

Nobody knew what the route would be beyond the Kicking Horse and Columbia confluence where Golden now is. To save mileage, the towering Selkirks should be pierced; but no feasible route was known. If one could not be found the long bend of the Columbia River would have to be followed for about three times the distance across the Selkirk range – and the saving of distance as against the Yellowhead line, would be something like nothing.

The man selected to find a pass over the Selkirks was Major Rogers, a veteran of the American Civil War. He had spent the summer of 1881 in a preliminary survey. Though he could not see his way through he was confident one could be found. When the summer of 1882 was well spent Rogers and his companion Carrol, five days up the

Illecillewaet River, were almost bare of supplies. Rogers pointed to the shoulder of a distant peak now called Mount Macdonald, said he believed a way was there; and it would only take a few days to find it.

"All very well for you," said Carrol, "but we are down to our last bannock. You may be willing to die for glory, but how about me?"

Rogers promised, if the pass were found, to name a mountain after Carrol – which was done, and maintained, till somebody changed it to Mount Tupper. Rogers and Carrol found a pass; came through all but dead; and Rogers received a cheque for five thousand dollars from Van Horne; which he refused to cash, and framed for his descendants, apparently unaware that he could get it back after it had gone through the bank.

Major Rogers, by the way, afterwards was engineer on construction of the Manitoba North Western Railway which took, broadly, the course north-westward from Portage la Prairie which the main line of the C.P.R. was intended to follow before the Calgary route was adopted.

The Armstrong name, then, stuck with me, long after the world knew that the Rogers Pass was named in honor of its discoverer. Twenty years after this first winter in Regina I sat at a table in a hotel in Port Perry, on Lake Scugog, Ontario, beside a fine-looking bearded man, who turned out to be the Armstrong of the Mountains story. He said he had spent several years engineering in the Rockies, and described vividly the building of the famous horse-shoe curves on the Glacier side of the Selkirks, which have become obsolete through the five mile Connaught tunnel under Mount MacDonald, which cuts down five hundred and twenty-two feet of climb, shortens the line by four and a half miles of snowsheds. When I asked how they could make so many loops to get

down the mountain side he answered "We had no right-of-way to buy."

Mr. Armstrong was as interesting as the legend of him which pervaded Regina during the first winter of its existence – which is more than can be said of the reality of many heroes of romance. We traveled to Toronto together; and the contact with him enhanced one's impression of the high capacities that have gone into so many Canadian enterprises as a matter of course; and without winning the official or popular reputation which inferior accomplishments frequently receive.

A good friend say, sometimes, that the difference between Canada and the United States is that the United States are a great country, with a great people, who are not as great as they think they are; and Canada is a great country, inhabited by a great people who are much greater than they believe themselves to be. I think he is right; and would fain preach earnest sermons from his text – if this were the place for sermons. We are working all too slowly, perhaps, to a sense of our own magnitude.

Just about the time this was set down one of the most famous men who have emerged from Brandon said to the writer: "I hope before I die to see Canadians have left off licking other people's boots." My old friend was referring particularly to political conditions, which continually surprise him, in view of the abundant self-reliance of our population in their private affairs.

One can look back upon some of his earlier experiences with sufficient detachment to feel assured of a reasonably sound judgment. Over more than forty years one can see in his departure from Regina a modicum of the quality that has made Canada the home of a self-reliant, constructive people. The purchase of a horse and water-carrying outfit was one's first real plunge into initiative against the

unknown, which might eventuate in loss. Working two winter months at shovelling snow was, after all, somewhat of a futile proceeding – a shovel-full of snow for a cup-full of water may look big, but it feels small when you keep up the process day after day; and I was tired of the monotonous exercise, healthy though it surely was.

On the last day of February I threw down the shovel, and told the foreman that it was the last stroke of work I'd do as somebody else's man – and, so far, events have justified the prophecy. Next day I was off to Brandon, where home has been ever since.

Chapter IX
WOES AND WAYS OF PIONEERS

The trouble of today is the fun of tomorrow. Nothing is more remarkable in the story of pioneers who created the West out of infinite hardship than the way in which, like Goldsmith's soldier who shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won, they rejoiced over the tribulations out of which they have come. "Those were the happy days" is the almost unanimous testimony of men and women who survived conditions which, to many of our softer contemporaries, would seem impossible to endure.

In the midst of the multitude of the last Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto, I met Peter Hall and the sister, who has kept house for him for thirty-five years, and both of whom are enjoying life in the Queen City. Peter Hall is a pioneer of pioneers – most likely unique in the youthfulness of his historical age. He sold his own-grown wheat in Brandon nearly forty-five years ago, and his is not yet sixty years of age. With much glee he turned aside from the moving crowd to give his story to another friend, who also was in the West forty years ago.

Peter came west from Ontario at fourteen years of age, and squatted on a homestead at Gainsborough, over a hundred miles south-west of Brandon, and now on the Souris branch of the C.P.R. He could not enter for land before he was eighteen, but he started alone as a bachelor farmer, trusting to his growing right arm and the development of the future to make good. As he still

owns eight hundred acres of land in that choicest corner of Saskatchewan, Peter has certainly made good.

In the early winter, he brought fifty bushels of wheat by ox-team from Gainsborough to Brandon, the first-fruits of his pioneering toil. He was five days on the trail. Accommodations for his team and himself cost him sixteen dollars. In Brandon he could find no buyer for his grain, though he walked up and down, inquiring diligently for a customer. Finally, Chief of Police McMillan, always on the alert with his piercing, black eyes, spotted the boy, and learned his disheartening story – five days on the road, sixteen dollars expense, and no chance to sell his load. He told the Chief he thought he would dump his grain on a vacant lot.

"No," said the Chief, "you mustn't do that. I would have to take you before the magistrate, and you would be fined, for some person's cow might get into the wheat and blow herself up."

"Well, then," said Pete, "I'll take it down to the river, and dump it in there."

"No," said the Chief, "that would be wasteful. I'll tell you what I'll do. I am buying oats at thirteen cents a bushel. If it will help you any, I'll give you the same for your wheat."

Peter accepted the offer and received six dollars and fifty cents for his fifty bushels of wheat. It was less than half his expenses on the way, but he was happy, and always had a warm spot in his heart for the big policeman who helped him out.

For a time he did not feel encouraged to grow wheat at Gainsborough at that price, though he hung on to his homestead. He contracted to break land for Mr. Reisberry who made pumps, and was to pay Peter from the profits of his enterprise. But he had bought the logs, out of which the

pumps were to be made, from a man who got them from Government land without obtaining a permit, and they were confiscated by the Government. Reisberry could not pay for the ploughing, and a young Peter Hall had again done more for the country than the country had done for him. He mourned then. He laughs now, as only the owner of eight hundred acres of first-rate land can afford to laugh.

The gayety of pioneers looking back on their earlier troubles is not limited to those who derive from pioneering stock in the East. There is abundance of amusing and more or less authentic stories about people who came from the Old Land to a style of life, of which they could have had no real conception. But the country is fuller of people who went through the discouraging mill after being accustomed to easier living across the sea, and whose contribution to western development has given them an intense appreciation of the excellences of life in a new environment. That is true, even of those who, for various reasons, returned to Europe.

Among the worthiest Rounthwaite pioneers were Mr. and Mrs. David Shields, who returned to Scotland. I had the pleasure of visiting them in Bathgate, where Mrs. Shields said that she would very much prefer living in Manitoba without sugar in her tea, without tea even, to remaining in Scotland, did circumstances permit her to return to Brandon.

It was probably otherwise with Mr. and Mrs. Browning who returned to England as their original intention was when they emigrated in consequence of a reverse of fortune through going security for another's debt. Mr. Browning arrived first and took up a homestead on the Little Saskatchewan, where he could look across the Assiniboine Valley to the high ground of Kemnay. His wife and daughter come up the river on the same boat as Lee and

the others who stayed at Grand Valley. They were delayed by the flood at Currie's Landing, which was a terminus of part of the Assiniboine fleet.

It was the 24th of May when Captain Sheats brought his stern-wheel cruiser up at Grand Valley pier, and received a welcome from the whole population, whose burg was as well decorated in honor of Queen Victoria's birthday as a scanty supply of flags and bunting and a plentiful supply of loyalty would permit.

Captain Sheats was bound for Fort Ellice – indeed I am not sure that this was not the trip he made to Fort Pelly, the summit of steam navigation. He put the ladies off right at the mouth of the Little Saskatchewan where they stepped up to their waist in the remains of last year's luxuriant growth along the river bank.

Here were two ladies of culture, landed into pioneer conditions which might well have made their hearts sick. Mr. Browning was there with a yoke of oxen and a wagon, and conveyed them home, which was a half-finished cabin with door and windows still in the future. The weather was pretty good and they made the best of such crude and novel conditions. On the rafters they hung their cups and trinkets; and really rejoiced in the unusual situation of doing everything for themselves with very little to do it with.

A few days later, Miss Browning was sitting in the cabin fixing a hat, thinking of her school friends and wondering if she would ever return to them. Suddenly, she noticed a dust cloud swirling along the trail, swiftly increasing in speed and volume as it approached the door. In less time than it takes to tell it the wind and dust had possessed the house, blew the hat from her hand, carried off the roof and all the domestic aids and personal treasures of her mother and herself. There she stood, speechless with terror, when,

suddenly as the wind had come in, the rain came down in torrents, the day changed almost into the darkness of night, and the temperature fell, as only it can in our lively latitudes.

That night the family slept as best it could in the stable, with never a thought of abandoning the assault on capricious fortune. The Brownings farmed successfully. Mr. Browning became Reeve of Daly municipality. Miss Browning used to play the organ at the Union Church that was built half-way up the hill between Dan and Norman McMillan's houses. The old folks and their son Fred returned to England. Miss Browning married Mr. C. C. Hearn.

It is one of the peculiar compensations of life that the payment for enduring hardness comes in laughter, many years after the suffering has passed away. Not so long ago, I happened to be in Carberry where, around the hotel stove, a few old-timers gathered. One of them was a man I vividly remember seeing come up Sixth Street over forty years ago with a yoke of oxen, from whose noses long icicles hung, and whose knees were barked as a result of breaking the ice-crusted trail. Mr. Ellerington entertained the company with an account of what happened to him before and after he found shelter for his oxen in Trotters' stable.

He had homesteaded west of Hamiota and was blessed with a most excellent wife, who labored as hard as he did, and bore as uncomplainingly the deprivations of pioneer life. He threshed his first little crop late in the season – that was ages before the time when almost every farmer had his own threshing outfit – and set off to Brandon with his oxen and a load of eighteen bags of wheat.

His wife bid him farewell with high hopes of seeing him return in about a week with a nice bit of cash, the first real return for their many toils. They had spent nearly all

the money they brought with them from the East, on a small house, a stable and a well. As Mrs. Ellerington saw her husband disappear from view, she was as cheerful as could be at the prospect of remaining alone for a week, tending the cow and busying herself about the house. She was a little anxious, though, about the trail, and had some fear as to whether he could cross the Assiniboine safely.

Breaking trail with oxen hauling a load of wheat is no speedy business. The weather turned cold, and Ellerington, to keep himself warm, would walk ahead of his team and come back to persuade them not to loiter. On the evening of the third day, as he came down the northern hills of the valley, the whiffletrees striking the hocks of his team were music to his ears. As he saw the lights of little Brandon on the opposite slope, he told himself how good a supper he would enjoy, and how fine it would be for his faithful beasts to have good shelter and feed. He had had trouble that day, for one of the oxen played out; and it was not easy to make time with a beast which had to rest for as long a time as he was able to move.

It was a very cold and stormy evening. Ellerington wondered if the wind blew so keen a gale around his home, and comforted himself with the remembrance that he had left his wife plenty of wood; and that she was of cheery disposition. He told himself also that, when the wheat was cashed, he would try to find some special little present for her. He met a neighbor, who had just left town of home, and asked him to stop in and tell his wife he was over the river, in good shape. The neighbor was not to let Mrs. Ellerington know that one of the oxen had played out, and prevented him reaching Brandon in time to get rid of his load before dark.

In Brandon the hotels and stables were full of other farmers who had brought in grain from places as far apart

as Glenboro, Deloraine, Shoal Lake and Oxbow. He left his oxen in the shelter from the wind at the corner of Sixth Street and Pacific Avenue, while he scouted for accommodation. In the stable he rubbed the ice off their legs, fixed them comfortably for the night, and then sought food and rest for himself. He had eaten nothing all day, except the remains of a frozen lunch his wife had put in his overcoat pocket.

On the street he met an old school mate, who, as far as he knew, was still in the East, and was surprised to lean that he had been married that day to a hotel waitress, whose employer was giving a dance in honor of the event. This man had a sweetheart in Huron County, Ontario, but despaired of getting enough money to go east for her, his crop having been frozen. On the previous day he had come into town on business, and was attracted by the waitress; and on twenty-four hours' acquaintance they had been married. Into this festivity Ellerington was brought by his old friend.

The dining room had been cleared, the dance was about to begin. As Ellerington opened the hotel door and passed the bar, a bricklayer was singing "Around her slender form I placed a magic circle." Ellerington thought this was a fine, comfortable place and wished his wife was along to see a little gay life after so long a spell upon the silent plain.

The bar room was crowded with sturdy, jovial fellows; and the groom said to Ellerington: "Come in and have a drink. In this house you only pay for what you drink. You can get all you want to eat for nothing."

That seemed to be true, but it was not explained that sometimes this kind of lunch was furnished by the wholesome liquor dealers, who spiced up the food so that the more a man ate the more he would drink.

The bartender, after serving the groom's treat, said: "Have something with me." Then Ellerington noticed the bartender had a diamond ring, and that his hand was soft. He said to himself that this fellow, anyway, was flourishing on other people's thirst. The barman also told what a fine girl his friend had got for a wife, and promised that, in a moment, he would see that Ellerington got a room. But the crowd increased at the bar; and, as the men who had most money to spend were waited on first, and the song and dance were proceeding, it was well on in the morning before Ellerington got a bed, and then it was in a room with two men he never saw before.

There was only one grain elevator in Brandon. Seeing that the town was full of farmers with loads of grain, Ellerington knew that he must be out early in the morning, or wait possibly a week to get unloaded. So he was up betimes. He was a long while getting his oxen hitched, for they were stiff and sore. On the corner of Sixth Street where the grain buyers congregated, two or three of them climbed onto his load and, untying the bags, sampled the grain. They said that, the grain being frozen, they could only give him thirty cents a bushel.

Ellerington, being of an independent mind, said he would rather dump it in the river than sell it at that price.

Teams were crowding along by this time, so that the buyers would have no lack of business. They were as independent as he, and told him he must take thirty cents, or get out of the way. Ellerington reckoned up his prospects – thirty-six bushels of wheat at thirty cents a bushel came to $10.80. Picking up the poplar stick with which he goaded his oxen, he vowed, with a lump in his throat, he would never take that price for his wheat, and told the grain buyers he hoped the grass would grow on their accursed streets.

One buyer, who seemed to realize the farmer's unhappy position, said:

"I'm sorry about the price Mr. Ellerington, but you see, we can't afford to pay you any more, for the railroad takes the price of a bushel for every bushel they haul to the lakes."

"Well," said Ellerington, as he started away, "I'll take it to Carberry."

His father lived at Carberry, where he arrived after another day and a half of very hard going on the trail. Around Carberry the land is lighter than it is at Hamiota, and the crop there had escaped the frost. Ellerington had no better encouragement to sell his wheat at Carberry; and so he traded it with his father for unfrozen seed wheat. After another five days' journey he arrived at home with as big a load of wheat as he had taken away ten days before.

The astonishment and disappointment of his wife are easier imagined than described; but she sympathized with him, told him that some day they would have a railroad and a market nearby; and so they made the best of a bad situation. Ellerington and his brothers have had their share of prosperity during many less trying years.

The best answer to criticism of the West is the West. People who used to say it would never be a country lived to see it a wonderful country. It may be that a great deal more ability has gone into the transformation of the empty prairie into what we now see of well-equipped farms and well-appointed towns and cities than has been well rewarded. Perhaps some who have stuck to agriculture might have flourished more if, like many we all can recall, they had launched into other activities instead of staying with the pioneering game.

In the early days many people knew a Scotchman called Menzies who was a freighter between Brandon

and Minnedosa. He was a well-educated, well-spoken young fellow, who did his work thoroughly and without complaining. He was evidently dissatisfied with his prospects, for he said to me one day, as he was loading his wagon, that he would like to marry some rich girl.

After various changes of fortune Menzies drifted east, and landed in Chicago, at the time of the World's Fair in 1893. There he obtained employment with a manufacturer who, liking him, sent him to San Francisco to run a branch under his own name. When he had been at 'Frisco some time, a Scotchman who had become very wealthy in California, owning orange groves and other property, was walking down the street with his daughter, when she saw the name Menzies on a sign. She said to her father that she used to go to school with a boy named Menzies, and, out of curiosity, the inquired. Our ex-freighter was the Menzies. In three months he and the girl were married. While they were on their wedding trip her father died; they came into all his property; the freighter's dream on a Brandon street came true, and one has reason to know they lived happily ever after.

The Menzies story, though, is a much more distant affair than the rise of a man whom we knew as intimately forty years ago as it is possible for men who live in the same house to know one another. There came to the West in 1879 a young Irish bachelor, who was born at Kirkfield, Ontario and who homesteaded near Minnedosa. Before qualifying for his patent, three years after entering, he was offered $500, for the improvements he had made on the place. He refused it because he said he intended, when he had got the patent, to homestead again; and the Government would not allow a man to homestead a second time until he had fulfilled the duties belonging to his first location. One mentions this to support the view that his homesteader was

not dreaming dreams of great wealth when he was baching on the prairie. Later, he traded his homestead for a yoke of oxen.

When Brandon was in its infancy and Mr. J. W. Sifton had a farm just south of the city, he hired this young man to break his land with oxen for six dollars an acre. He then had more than one yoke of oxen and, as things were, he made a pretty good thing out of his contract. He boarded his team in our stable and himself at the hotel. He also had horses and did freighting to Rapid City, Minnedosa and other places. He was jovial, reliable – altogether a fine fellow, not credited with extraordinary ability.

Alec Trotter had brought with him from Ontario a Prince Albert coat, which he traded to the ploughman who wore it to Winnipeg, where he went to get more team power. When he returned he made a great joke of his appearance, for he said the good people of Winnipeg took him for a missionary and insisted on treating him as such.

Many a time when dining with Pat Burns in his mansion at Calgary have we laughed over the coat he got from Alec Trotter. After doing his bit to bring prairie land under cultivation around Brandon, Pat Burns worked for and with another Kirkfield man who had come west – William Mackenzie. He went into the business of supplying meat to construction outfits with the firm of Ross, Holt, Mackenzie and Mann, which built the C.P.R. line to St. John, across Maine; the Regina and Long Lake from Regina to Prince Albert; and the Calgary and Edmonton lines.

Out of this grew the Burns' chain of butcher shops, which, twenty-five years after the coat trade, were operating in twenty-seven different western towns and cities. Since 1890 his headquarters have been at Calgary. He has been called "the Phil Armour and the Cattle King of the North West" as became a man who owned twelve ranches, and

the nearest approach to Chicago Stock Yards between Winnipeg and Japan.

The men who came to Brandon in obscurity and became leaders in wider walks of life elsewhere are legion. One more may be named here. Two young partners in a grading outfit, which took some of the bumps out of Sixth Street, for instance, were Douglas Cameron and his friend MacLaren. Cameron was particularly liked, both my his teamsters, and all who did business with him. After leaving the hotel where he had paid his men, he discovered he had lost $500. Going back he found it behind the seat on which he had been sitting.

Douglas Cameron did not remain at Brandon, but went into the lumbering business at Rat Portage, of which town he became mayor, and besides running his lumber mills, established and controlled the Maple Leaf Milling Company; was one of the biggest business men in the West; sat in the Ontario Legislature, and was the Lieutentant-Governor of Manitoba who gave the Roblin Government the option of resigning or being dismissed – an option that was taken up immediately with the discretion which is the better part of all political bravado.

Chapter X
PIONEERS ALSO

Familiarity may breed contempt, but unfamiliarity also is frequently the parent of lightness, which is a sort of contempt. Many who now laugh over their first tribulations on the plain also admit that they would never have left the comforts of an eastern home if they had known what they were coming to. That sentiment applies to many other kinds of pilgrims' progress.

Mrs. Clement, the late sheriff's wife, has told me that if she had received an undelivered letter that was meant for her, shoe would never have ventured into the Manitoba unknown. Thousands of people came to the West thinking they would make enough money in about five years to return to their birthplaces, comfortable for life. They were as erroneously informed as a gentleman I met when crossing the English Channel who asked about Canada and especially Brandon fair, and wanted to know if we worked the buffalo, or had a daily paper in Canada.

People who were hunting for land, as they painfully traversed the prairie behind their oxen, were sometimes disturbed by signs of the Indians, or by the Indians themselves. There was something weird about coming across the gaunt poles of a forsaken tepee when the sun was going down. In the distance it was almost awesome to hear the creaking of Red River carts, in the make-up of which there was not a piece of iron, and on the axles of which there was very little grease. Some disrespectful pioneers called the Red River cart the North West Fiddle. But whatever the

difficulties of invading and subduing a new and unknown country with a capricious, if exhilarating climate, they were bravely tackled by all sorts and conditions of people, by those who had means, as well as by those who had next to nothing.

Of such was John Doran who, in the summer that the Roddicks came to the Brandon Hills, settled six miles south of what is now Eighteenth Street. There he built one of the best farm houses that were put up during that period, and was widely known as Squire Doran. He owned the first reaping machine in the country. His home was always a place of first resort by a newcomer in quest of sound advice.

In the summer of 1880, Squire Doran's son, Charles, and several friends, hired a man and a team at Portage la Prairie, the end of steel, for one hundred and fifteen dollars, to drive them to Grand Valley. They landed at the little town by the river just before dark. Charlie Doran determined to find his father's place and about sun-down arrived with a friend at Tuttle's homestead – Mr. Tuttle afterwards built the Queen's Hotel where the Bank of Montreal now stands. Tuttle said they could not reach Doran's house because of a big slough that was in the way.

Still, Doran the younger pushed on around the slough and called at the homestead of Mr. Purvis, an Anglican minister who was afterwards famous for his leadership of the Farmers' Union, along with "Saskatchewan" Robinson who come from England to manager the farm of William Postlethwaite on the top of the hill east of where the Little Saskatchewan enters the Assiniboine Valley. Coming to a dug-out in the side of a hill, they noticed a small pane of glass in the door. Doran rapped and, to his surprise, a woman appeared – Mrs. John McLean, who said that Mr. John Doran lived straight west two miles.

When Charlie Doran at last reached his father's house, all was dark for the night. Calling his father up, he asked in an assumed voice, if he could keep a couple of strangers for the night. At once, Squire Doran called his hired man to let the strangers in – and found his son who had brought him a greatly relished treat, some Ontario apples.

Next day, Mr. Groom came along with a rather wild yoke of oxen on his wagon and asked Squire Doran how to break them properly, as they had run away the day before and broken his plough. Squire Doran cheerfully gave the desired tuition. After that, Mr. Hinman, another neighbor had a green Englishman working for him who was so awkward that he decided to pay him off. The squire said to Mr. Hinman, "Let me have him," and so with patience and perseverance the new-comer became an expert.

The greenhorn was not providentially intended for a farmer. He afterwards studied law, developed a good practice in Moosomin, and is now Judge McLorg, of Saskatoon. Meeting Mr. Charlie Doran in Saskatoon in 1914, Judge McLorg and a Mr. Leslie, owner of a large mill there, told him they had bound wheat by hand on his father's farm in 1881, the year in which oats sold for $1.50 a bushel; and Brandon, as Judge McLorg said, looked more like a circus than anything else, with its tents all over the place.

Too much cannot be said about the neighborliness of the pioneers. But an occasional exception proved the rule. Mr. Dunbar of the Brandon Hills got stuck on the river bank at Grand Valley. As the water was rising higher and higher, he asked a passer-by with a team what he would charge for helping to haul him out. The man said ten dollars. Lee, the harness man heard of this exorbitant demand and said to some young fellows, "Come on, and we'll haul it out for nothing." Which they did. Manitoba has been and is full

of good Samaritans. The Levite has been so scarce as to be specially remembered.

What has been said in another place may suggest that dining room girls were as ready for matrimony as they were with menus. A great deal of nobility went into that kind of service all the same. Under auspices which were said to be Methodistic, but of which one gathered little information, what was called the York Colony was founded somewhere between the Qu'Appelle River and Yorkton. Some of the parties to this enterprise were in Brandon.

At one of the popular hotels two girls both called Annie, were employed as waitresses at twenty-five dollars a month. One of the girls had come out with the York Colony. Her father, Mr. Kirk, homesteaded north of Neudorf, where he cut wood and hauled it to Grenfell, forty miles, for a dollar and a half a load. Flour was eight dollars a sack, so it took him and his team three weeks' hard work to earn the price of a sack of flour.

Annie Kirk stuck to her job in Brandon to help the family. She married George Forbes and their home in Melville is one of the best in the West. I had the pleasure of driving the other girl and her fiancee, Mr. Hockley, to the minister's. For thirty years Mr. Hockley was Indian agent at Qu'Appelle. Forty-two years after driving them to their wedding, I immensely enjoyed a visit to their hospitable home at Qu'Appelle.

It has been a long way from the financial helplessness of some of the pioneers to an organized agriculture which has become a big interest like the Saskatchewan Co-Operative Elevator Company, whose local elevators, on the day before this was written, received one million, six hundred thousand bushels of wheat.

Amos Smith, a farmer needing some money, asked a hotel-keeper he knew whom we will call Poil, if he could

say where he might borrow a hundred dollars.

Poil answered, "I'll see. Come back after dinner."

Poil put a hundred dollars in his pocket, went to a lawyer and said: "Here now, you get me ten percent on this, and you can charge what you like. I'll bring a borrower down after dinner, and introduce him to you."

After dinner Smith and Poil met, and Poil said he knew where Smith could be accommodated; took him down the street where he was asked fifteen percent interest, and was charged seven dollars for drawing a chattel mortgage as security. A year's interest, and the lawyer's fee were deducted from the principal, so that Smith, in return for a mortgage upon his stock received seventy-eight dollars in cash. In seemed rather expensive, but he was delighted to get the money, returned to the hotel to thank his friend Poil for having obliged him, called the crowd to the bar, spent three dollars on drink, and carried seventy-five dollars home.

Some of the best pioneering experiences belong to men who were apt, in later years, to say they left the farm for the good of the farm. One such was conductor William Laird, whose regularity on trains between Winnipeg and Brandon and Brandon and Moose Jaw was remarkable. For eight years, at one stretch he never missed a trip. He was a friend of everybody who knew him.

Ambitious to farm, William Laird started alone to search for land, west of Deloraine. He and a friend shared in the cost of a yoke of oxen. The friend worked on the railway, while Laird was to find land, on which both could settle. Laird fell in with a homesteading Frenchman who begged for instruction how to fashion the corners of a log house. After a few days at that, Laird set off again; and saw a tent. In it he found asleep an old schoolmate, Jim Gibson, from Paris, Ontario, a future homestead inspector

and president of the Brandon fair, with home he stayed for the night.

In the morning one of the oxen was dead upon the plain. One ox was useless; it was 75 miles to Brandon where another could be bought, and William hadn't the money to buy one. Disconsolate, he hitched the remaining ox to the wagon and found his friend and partner, who took him to his grandfather's, who offered the boys the job of digging a well, at so much a foot; but no water no pay.

It was very hard work in very hard clay; William doing the digging, and the other hauling up the dirt by windlass. There was no sign of water at seventy feet, where a petrified tree was found. Grandfather so frequently repeated "No water no pay," at meal times, that William would quit discouraged, for a few hours, and then resume his task. At last he was down eighty feet, and still dry clay; and the job was abandoned.

The old man again said "No water no pay," which stirred William, and down he went again. He dug for a while, and at last said: "I'll do two more shovelsful, and then quit for good and all."

The first shovelful he put aside, not into the bucket, figuring it was no use making his pal haul up an unnecessary load. Driving his spade in for the final trial, water gushed forth so fast that William was wet to the waist before he could be pulled up.

The boys rushed to grandfather to tell him the well was filling. He refused to believe them, apparently fearing what their luck would cost him. They threw the rope over him, hauled him furiously protesting, to the well, where William pushed his feet from under him, and lowered him into the water, and gave him a good sousing. All's well that ends a well; and Laird and his friend got their money.

Billy Evans came straight from Wales to farm, leaving

his girl behind him, but ready to come as soon as he had a home. He drove from Winnipeg with his oxen, and his friends McLaren, Foxall and Jones. They had a fierce time, getting through sloughs and across creeks, more than once being all but drowned. Evans pitched on a homestead, and built a small shack, with a roof thatched with hay, an near as he could manage it, in Old Country style

He had no conception of what cold weather is like, and when the November nights came, he was surprised that his roof was so perfect a ventilator that his stove was useless. He was thankful that the future Mrs. Evans was still in Wales.

Worried because no lumber was nearer than Rapid City, he was experimental enough to cover the roof with clay – and was ever after snug and warm. When, next year, there was a Mrs. Evans, he often laughed with her over his ignorance of what might follow a summer during which the air was like the very wine of life, and the ground covered with wild vetches, with fragrant willows and grasses whispering in the breeze. Mr. Evans stuck faithfully to the religious teachings of his youth. His was not a conscience that would allow him to play golf on a Sunday morning and read the lesson in the afternoon.

Of all silent evidences of the lacks and deprivations, the costly toils and grave risks of the early days, which one still meets rather frequently in newer Manitoba, perhaps none recalls a more illuminating story than that told by Alec Logan now of Nesbitt, but of California before he came to this more invigorating climate, and developed into a leader of his community.

Alec bought a yoke of oxen in Brandon and started out to look for land. He came to the Souris river, at Souris, and paid five dollars to be ferried across, while his oxen swam. The ferryman had a loaded shot gun in the boat.

Alec suggested it was rather dangerous to keep a firearm there, even if ducks were plentiful on the river.

Alec found no land to suit him south of the river, and was compelled to pay another five dollars to come back by the same ferry.

The gun was still in the boat, and Alec had scarcely landed when, through some carelessness of the boatman, it went off, the charge landed in the ferryman's arm, and so nearly blew it off that the shattered, bleeding limb was bandaged, while a nearby carpenter finely filed his saw. The arm was amputated, amateurishly, but effectively, and the ferryman being a strong man, survived the shock, and thereafter never tolerated loaded guns in inappropriate places. I believe he is still living in Deloraine.

Chapter XI
BRANDON THE FIRST

Even if aeroplanes had been running forty-five years ago we would scarcely have had a real birdseye view of Brandon as it was in its earliest infancy when it began to put out of joint the nose of the senior infant, Grand Valley. When a prairie town is born, the people who are in at the beginning are concerned with their own most urgent affairs, and do not think of taking snapshots for the benefit of future generations with a turn for historical lore. Almost the only instance one recalls of having seen the very beginning of a town's history noted with historical sensibility, was a magazine article called "The First of Kindersley," in which the most effective photograph was of a small pine table with a suit case leaning against it – the preparation for the auctioneer's first sale of lots.

Of all the people from whom information about Brandon's first two years has come, Mr. J. A. Smart, of Montreal, has given the most vivid account of what the infant city was like:—

"The happiest days of one's life ought to be, I believe, those spent in the years when a man is beginning his career, after attaining his majority, when the world, full of opportunities and hope, lies before him. That being the case, no small town in Canada or elsewhere, could possibly have contained a happier army of young men than did Brandon in its earliest years. I am convinced that the almost unanimous opinion of those who located in Brandon in 1881 and 1882, or later, will endorse that proposition.

"My first experience in the town was before reaching my twenty-third birthday, and my pleasantest recollection is to think that it was my home for some sixteen years. There were scarcely one hundred souls in the place when I first saw it.

"My first sight of Brandon was prior to the advent of the C.P.R.. The line, at that time, ended at Portage la Prairie, at which place we had the choice of travelling by stage or by steamer. I chose the latter, as affording the most comfort, though three days were required to make the voyage. It is worthy of note that one large steamer was able to navigate the Assiniboine River in that year as far as Fort Pelly.

"Present residents can only be convinced of the accuracy of this statement by the explanation that the river rose many feet during the summer of 1881, and that the whole lower flat at Brandon was a large lake.

"I well remember my first experience in walking up Rosser Avenue. It was a beautifully clear day about the first of June, 1881. The street was marked out only by the location of two or three small buildings and one or two small shacks facing on it. I tramped over the marshy ground west of Ninth Street (almost a swamp), through very long grass, to reach Thirteenth Street, where a good hotel was being built (afterwards the Royal Hotel), by Mr. Chas. Pilling, the owner.

"The principal business establishments then were Whitehead & Myers, lumber dealers, and Brackett, Chute & Co., American railway contractors, who had a general store. Besides these, Coombs & Stewart, Winter & O'Neill and Captain Vivian, had opened stores, and Michael Tebo had a livery stable of canvas. Mr. L. Bergeron and Mrs. Douglas owned the two hotels, both of which were huge tents.

"I was a guest of Mrs. Douglas. The beds in her hotel were built along one side of the tent, and had upper and

lower berths like sleeping cars, with curtains to hide the occupants. The kitchen was a lean-to at one end; and the dining room, which was also the rotunda, occupied that part of the tent not used for sleeping berths. This was in the summer season and the accommodation thus provided, was of course only suitable for that season. Mrs. Douglas was a motherly lady of no mean proportions and with her daughter, dispensed with much grace the hospitality of her establishment.

"Not a few amusing things occurred in connection with this pretentious hostelry. I recall one of a number that afforded me quiet entertainment. The Rev. Thomas Lawson came to Brandon in the summer of 1881 to conduct the first Methodist service held, under cover in the city. Having no other suitable place Mrs. Douglas gave Mr. Lawson the use of her hotel tent, at least that part of it used as the dining room. There was a very good audience; and, after nearly all the people had arrived, and were seated, I noticed our land-lady, who was accompanied by her daughter, emerge silently from the corner of the tent, dressed in her most stately attire, not omitting bonnet, coat, and gloves, and pass out through the back door and kitchen, and around the tent, and march up before the congregation in high reverential style, to a front seat.

"The winter of 1881-1882 was a long, cold one. Business was about as dead as it well could be, so the chief occupation of the residents was, first to keep as warm as the shells of buildings, in which most of us lived, enabled them to, and to amuse ourselves. One favorite pastime was coasting on Sixth Street. That thoroughfare was a good steep hill at that time, and sleighs (we used the ordinary farmer's bob-sleigh or one bob, as convenient) would run from the top, above Princess Avenue, to the railway tracks. Skating and curling were brought in much later.

"There was no merrier member of the coasting parties on Sixth Street than A.C. Fraser, whom we soon learned to regard as the best public speaker in Manitoba. His career since as mayor and police magistrate is known to all Brandonians, past and present."

That is Mr. Smart's first retrospect of the city in which he lived with so much credit to himself and advantage to the community. He came to start in business for himself. The beginning of Brandon wore a somewhat different aspect to another of my friends.

James Canning, who lives a Deleau on the Souris-Regina line, told me that he arrived in Brandon early in 1881, looking for work. He walked from the track across the prairie to the corner of Tenth and Rosser, where he asked a man who was working on a building, where the town was. He said "Right here."

Mr. Canning climbed up on the window sill, and then further up onto the plate, and gazed all over the country. The only building he could see was a house on First Street, that was being built by Mr. Woodworth, just north of where the Imperial Oil works now stand, beside which Mr. Woodworth later put up a store with upstair lodge room, where the first Masonic and Oddfellows Lodges were held, and where, forty-two years ago I heard a speaker promise that we would have a railway to Hudson Bay within five years.

Mr. Canning soon came down off the building and said "I don't see any town." The man replied, "Well it is only a paper town yet."

Next day Canning attended a picnic in Grand Valley to escape from the loneliness of Brandon.

Mr. Canning looking for a town and finding none would scarcely appreciate that the prairie navy was already on active service. The first lumber had been brought up to

Brandon by Mr. Charles Whitehead, father of the present proprietor of the Brandon Sun. As he told me himself, when he arrived there was nobody to whom to sell the lumber except the Indians; and they did not need any for their tepees.

It was Mr. Whitehead who bought the first C.P.R. farm land in this part of the country. He paid two dollars and seventy-five cents an acre for a section about three miles south-west of the city. The railway official who sold him the land was Mr. W. D. Scott, afterwards Superintendent of Immigration at Ottawa.

Still, many of the people who came in first were sure that Brandon would soon outgrow Winnipeg because the land around it was dryer, and therefore more promising for good crops. I heard Mr. Jackson tell his colleagues on the Methodist official board that if he thought Brandon would not outgrow Winnipeg he wouldn't stay in it.

All the first comers were not future townsmen or farmers. Just as the missionary precedes the flag and trade, the townsite and railway surveyor is the advance herald of agriculture and commerce. Curiously, it was the railway constructionists who brought the first woman to Brandon. She was Mrs. Stinson, who came from Portage la Prairie, to do the cooking for the surveyors who staked out the whole of section twenty-three on the site of the present city, and section twenty-six across the river, practically none of which was to be built on for many years.

Among the surveyors was Mr. M. P. Hawley, who lived the remainder of his life just west of the city. He came with a nephew of Sir Oliver Mowat and W. D. Barclay who had been on the C.P.R. surveys for several years previously, and who ended his career some years ago as the Manager of the Halifax and South-Western Railway, the most easterly section of the Canadian Northern system. He was a brother

of J. D. Barclay who died a few years ago, after running a coal and wood business on Seventh and Pacific Avenue, and who tore up more promissory notes of his debtors than any other man I know of.

Mr. Hawley and his friends arrived on May 7th, 1881 having come from Portage la Prairie by boat to Currie's Landing where, growing impatient, they walked the rest of the way, carrying their surveying instruments, and following a wearisome, winding trail. They had a night's sleep on Brandon's site before the slower boat tied up at the bank of the river, west of the spot where the First Street Bridge was afterwards built, and where was left Mr. Whitehead's barge loaded with lumber.

If Mr. Hawley had had his way, Brandon lots would have been wider than they are, and the city, no doubt, correspondingly more extensive. But General Rosser thought more money was to be made out of small lots than large, and so it happened here, as it happened in thousands of other places, where communities are less spacious that they would have been if some irresponsible person in a responsible position had not thought more of present profit than of the future happiness of countless generations.

Another might-have-been reflects more credit upon the sensibility of one of our most admirable pioneers – Duncan Shaw, who was for so many years Secretary-Treasurer of Cornwallis municipality. He had homesteaded three miles south of what was to be Brandon, and learned from his brother the C.P.R. engineer we have seen working with General Rosser, of the pending development. He could have jumped in and made himself wealthy but for his scruple that, if he did anything of the kind, his brother's position with the railway might be prejudiced. I don't think Duncan Shaw had any idea that General Rosser himself was permitted by Mr. Stickney the then General

Manager of the C.P.R. to speculate in townsite lots, and could not therefore have reasonable taken exception to the brother of a colleague also taking advantage of a little early information. This conscientiousness of Duncan Shaw's was just like him. If virtue is its own reward, he must have felt abundantly repaid for having scotched any temptation to speculate in those far-off days.

The annals of the legal profession in every new country must be full of how future judges busied themselves in enterprises that had little or nothing to do with the majesty of the law. One of the earliest firms in Winnipeg was Killam, Ross and Haggart. The head of the firm became a judge of the Western Judicial District, and died Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners of Canada. He was one of the ablest lawyers and best judges the country ever had, and bore his own special part in several lines of pioneering. The third of the partners was Member of Parliament for Winnipeg from 1908, until he, too, became a judge.

The firm owned the first ferry which served the infant commerce of Brandon. This was because they also owned section twenty-six on the north side of the river, and they located the ferry just east of where the Western Canada Flour Mills now are, expecting that the city would forthwith bestride the Assiniboine.

One day the man that operated the ferry got drunk and sunk the scow. Killam, Ross and Haggart's representative paid a Mr. Koester $40 to raise it, and Koester handled the business till August 1883, when the bridge superseded it.

Like many others, Mr. Killam and Mr. Ross, tired of wiggling up the Assiniboine on one of the prairie cruisers, first came to Brandon over Brandon Hills where they made Mr. Roddick's acquaintance. A little later that season, having been out to visit his brother, and wishing to catch

the boat that was due back from Fort Ellice, Mr. Killam asked Mr. Roddick to drive him to Brandon, as he had the only team and buckboard in the country. Mr. Roddick sent his son, Robert. At Brandon Mr. Killam, in bidding the boy good-bye, said: "Well this is Sunday. You cannot get any candy today, so here is a little money to buy yourself some next time you come to town."

Bobbie's eyes snapped at the sight of the bill, which he thought was a dollar. He thanked the stranger very nicely, and, of course felt that he was the best tenderfoot ever, as it was not often he saw a dollar bill.

Turning the horses for home, he was soon over the hill. To make sure of the dollar, he stopped to roll it up more carefully, and put it away down in his pocket where it would be perfectly safe. Taking a second look, he saw to his amazement, that it was a five dollar bill; the first he had ever seen. He never forgot Mr. Killam whom he quickly recognized as one of the cleverest judges that ever sat on a bench in the Western Judicial District – or any district.

The first auction sale of lots at Brandon took place on June 11th, 1881. The high figure was around $350. Perhaps the most calculating buyer was John Dickinson, a New Brunswicker, who later kept store. He wanted to be sure of owning something in the business centre of the city that was to out-distance Winnipeg. So he bought the corners of Seventh and Pacific Avenue, of Ninth and Rosser, and Twelfth and Princess. Ninth and Rosser was the lucky buy, for it has been the hub of Brandon ever since the railway station was moved from Sixth to Ninth.

There was a difference of opinion as to who built the first store in Brandon. Mr. Hawley thought that Winter and O'Neill erected the first on Pacific Avenue, between Eighth and Ninth Streets and that closely following it was Girven's blacksmith shop on the corner of Rosser and Fourteenth.

After a good deal of inquiry, one is inclined to believe, though, that the first store in Brandon was brought in sections from Grand Valley. The firm of Coombs and Stewart opened a drygoods business there in a twelve by sixteen shack they erected on what was supposed to be a lane, until they should purchase a lot. They had scarcely begun business when they learned of the impending founding of Brandon through Mr. A. Fisher, who had come from Winnipeg after interviewing the railway officials who had purchased Mr. Adamson's homestead. Mr. Fisher wanted to get a free site for a flour mill from the railway people, who, at the beginning were offering property at low rates so as the more quickly to put Grand Valley to death.

Coombs and Stewart decided at once not to buy lots in Grand Valley. They took down their store in sections, carried it to the boat and shipped it and their stock of goods to the same landing place as had received Whitehead's barge load of lumber. They set it up again on the corner of Sixth and Pacific Avenue on the same day.

It is beyond the wit of man to catalogue in their order of appearance the stores, hotels and houses which made up the Brandon of 1881. One can select only a few of the typical pioneers of the city.

We have seen Tom Lee working at his harness, knee-deep in water, in the McVicar woodshed at Grand Valley, and have read the breezy advertising of his stock, afterwards, on Sixth Street. No man ever took more trouble to make dumb brutes comfortable, in harness and out. He was fond of music, and had one of the first pianos in town. The Methodist choir used to practice in his little lean-to house next to the harness shop. He put a board on top of his piano and cut his leather on it.

His daughter, Kitty Lee, who later became Mrs. A. C. Douglas, was the most popular girl in the place. She was

the leading soloist at every concert that was given in the early days. At every ball she was the belle.

The first blacksmith is with us still, though he does not swing his heavy sledge with measured beat and slow as constantly as he did in the long, long ago. The firm was MacKenzie and Russell. Russell has gone; MacKenzie remains. He not only shod the first horses of the city, but he donated a big cake to the first tea meeting that was held, which was sold by auction.

Before substantial hotels could be finished, there were, as Mr. Smart has shown, hostelries under canvas. There were also refreshment places that called themselves by no ambitious name. But for what is now written perhaps the first restaurant-keeper of the city would probably be forgotten. He did not reach the eminence in his chosen vocation that another of our restaurateurs has since done in the person of Mr. George Wright, who is joint-proprietor of the Walker House and the Carls-Rite Hotels in Toronto, and is a member of the Toronto Transportation Commission, which operates the finest street railway system on the continent.

Tom Spence kept a restaurant, the structure of which was a plank laid across two barrels, alongside the trail which is now Pacific Avenue. He was a little Englishman, whose tongue betrayed him for a Cockney as soon as he opened his mouth. He wore a full beard, which became very white, like his hair. He had kindly blue eyes and was very gentlemanly. "You're right!" was his favorite expression in approval of what was said to him. His summer stock-in-trade was a keg of cider, bottle of lime juice, a couple of pails of water, and two drinking glasses.

As an advertiser he was original. To attract attention he chained a badger to a post just far enough from the counter to be unable to bite customers. He was a unique influence

in the region roundabout, for he was the first New Manitoba importer of cates, which he sold to good advantage to settlers.

Everybody liked Tommy Spence, though few took him as seriously as he took himself. When Brandon's population was counter by fewer hundreds than it now has thousands, the city was divided into four wards. Spence ran for alderman against Russell of MacKenzie and Russell, the blacksmiths. Being refeated, though promises had indicated he would win, he was asked if there were not a lot of liars in Ward One. "You're right!" he said.

Tommy drifted into the second-hand furniture business on Rosser Avenue, just west of Eighth Street, where, sad to say, young men sometimes delighted in teasing, and putting up jobs on him. Some still around town could, no doubt, tell of dressing up in girl's clothes, hat and gloves, going into his shop on the pretense of making purchases, and making love to him. He stuck to business till he could do business no more, and returned to England to die.

A different kind of character was Tom Barton who ran the City Hotel, itself somewhat unique in that business, for it was originally the first Union Church of Brandon. It was often called The Tabernacle Hotel. Tom Barton was of Hiberian descent, with the map of Ireland spread all over his countenance. He was a very big, pock-marked man, with large, protruding blue eyes, wore a moustache and goatee, and reveled in rough speech.

He delighted to be different from everybody else. In winter he would wear a tam-o-shanter or, maybe, a straw hat, and go with his shirt collar open and his shirt sleeves up which it was forty below zero. He went around in slippers, and sported yellow corduroy pants, tucked inside of long red stockings that came up to his knee. In summer he was just as likely to wear a fur cap and fur coat buttoned

up to the throat, with mitts and muffler, especially if he was going down street on business. He kept a jackass tied beside the hotel and often rode it, with his own feet almost trailing the ground, as his great weight curved the donkey's back.

There was no luxury about the City Hotel bar-room, which was two steps down the street, and had a counter that was simply a board across the room. When times were dull, the hotel caught fire upstairs. Tom stood in the street very calm while the old straw ticks were being thrown through the upstair windows to the street, whereat he loudly called: "Boys don't waste the feathers." The fire was subdued, but things went from bad to worse, and finally the City Hotel was closed.

Old Tom Barton had two fine sons, one of whom was severely wounded in the Riel Rebellion. The hotel that had been a church became MacIntyre's pump factory, Mr. MacIntyre living upstairs and boring wood pumps below by horse-power, which was driven by Harry Cater, a young Englishman who took the first job that offered, and who has since been mayor of the city for a longer period than any of his predecessors.

It may be inevitable that in running over the distinctive inhabitants of a pioneer prairie town one repeatedly turns to drink, especially when speaking of a period when every hotel bar-room was the busiest apartment in the establishment. Each new hotel that was built sought to outdo the others, and the first popularity, therefore, was apt to belong to the last hotel.

On the whole, perhaps the Kelly House was the most favored. The bar was run by Harry Powers, who having become a highly successful farmer, invented a door for grain cars, intended to save the breakage, which costs the railways thousands of dollars a year.

You never know how closely your obscure neighbor may have touched some great historical event. One of the first and best bakers in Brandon was an Irishman named Quinn. He and Billy Wilson the blacksmith were indispensable to the magnificence of every Twelfth of July procession. His wife, a most worthy woman, was in India during the Mutiny and used to describe, with extraordinary vividness, the siege and relief of Lucknow, in which, I believe, she participated; and could make your hair stand on end as she recounted the horrors of the blackest episode of the Mutiny – the massacre of hundreds of women and children at Cawnpore by Nana Sahib, and the throwing of their bodies into a well.

With Quinn's bakery is associated in one's mind an admirable example of pioneering thrift. One of their customers was Mrs. Molesworth, daughter of Mr. J. W. Sifton whose husband built the Molesworth Block. Once a month, Mrs. Molesworth took back to Mrs. Quinn the string with which the wrappings of her loaves of bread had been tied.

Chapter XII
MORE OF BRANDON THE FIRST

The first official passenger train arrived in Brandon on October 11th, 1881. It carried Sir Charles Tupper, Minister of Railways, whose arrival at the end of steel was an event of first-class public importance, which interfered immediately with business. The same fall, too, the Governor-General, the Marquis of Lorne saw Brandon.

The great people who have been here since are legion, but none can ever be as legendary as Sir John A. Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Canada. Sir John was also M.P. for Kingston, where his popularity was not confined to his political partisans. Saluting children was, with him, a natural-born art and not an acquired political manoeuvre. The girl with the fair curls who came to the Trotter farm at Pittsburg was one of his favorites, long before the national policy was evolved.

His first visit to Brandon was soon enough after the Canadian Pacific really became a transcontinental project for a certain halo, begotten of that great darling, to be still about his head. The timorous people who thought Canadians should be content with a boat route across Huron and Superior in summer, and an approach to the western plains through the United States in winter, had been routed by the aggressive optimism which he compressed into five of the most fateful words that ever became an electioneering slogan:– "All rail route or nothing."

Sir John stood on the rear of the train with his light, curly hair waving in the breeze, his hat in his hand, and

wearing his never-absent red tie, such as only socialists and communists display in these colorful times. Among other things, he said that he had come up on the horizontal for his first visit to the West. Lady MacDonald had been here before. In fact, she was getting to be an old-timer, and if she came to settle in the West, he would have to come too. "And then, what would become of Ottawa and our great Dominion," he asked, with a quizzical smile, while the crowd laughed.

"I am told," Sir John also said, "you can come in on the train in the morning and start ploughing in the afternoon," – an allusive contrast with Ontario which men who stood around, and who had cleared farms in the East, enjoyed, especially when he went on to say:–

"I am told that some in this new country are not content, but you know, ladies and gentlemen, some of us will not be content in heaven if we hear of a place father west."

That, of course, was true, as well as funny. People move on, both as to distance and as to circumstances. In Brandon itself there was a bachelor business man who, in winter, used to carry his little stove upstairs every night to keep him warm in bed and bring it down every morning for commercial purposes. Jim Lambert, a bachelor homesteader, half way up to the Little Saskatchewan, tried an incubator stunt of his own. He hung a can of eggs over the stove by day, took it to bed with him at night, and was much disappointed when the eggs did not break into singing.

Among the earliest arrivals at Brandon was William Muir, who continues to run his grocery on Sixth Street, in the building which was originally the first liquor store in the city. He was quite a youngster when he came to the West and walked to Grand Valley with Mr. Tom Burns, father of Alec Burns who was, for many years, in the Land

Titles office, Brandon. Also in the party were Mr. Kennedy, Mr. McLeod and Mr. Davis, a painter. That was when the Government still had the idea that everything west of the Postage Stamp Province was fit only for ranching, and when Carberry was called De Winton. The Muir party paid four dollars each for their trunks to be brought from De Winton to Brandon.

Quite early in his western career, Mr. Muir, though a boy, paid, out of his own pocket, for a load of oats which he bought for his employers, which they sold at over one hundred per cent. profit, and for which, being at the time hard pressed by more insistent creditors, they did not reimburse their employee for many, many moons.

One of the first milk vendors of the city was Mr. Ben Miles, who stabled his cows under the culvert at Eighteenth Street and Pacific Avenue. The warmth from the cows kept the planks above them clear of snow, and caused a great deal of trouble to sleigh teams that had to cross the culvert. Mr. Miles was a very strong man who, if he stopped to talk to people, would continue to hold his five-gallon can of milk in one hand. His most entertaining reminiscence of the period when winter milk was sold by the frozen pound, was in having encountered and vanquished a burglar whom his wife helped him to tie up, and who was consigned to the pen for three years.

There were people who thought that the infant Brandon was a lawless community, but they were folks who knew nothing of frontier towns across the line. It is easier to accept than to verify the story that has been written to the effect that, when Brandon had twelve hundred people, it had also twelve policemen. The city council, it is said, had great difficulty in keeping these twelve apostles of good behavior from getting in one another's way, during the search for criminality.

It is also said that when the first flush of the boom was over; and money became embarrassingly scarce; and the popular demand upon the city fathers was for economy and for more economy, the police force was cut in half, first to save the high cost of salaries, and secondly to increase the crop of fines. Prevention was less profitable than penalization. If the tale of offenders increased, the civic treasury would be advantaged thereby.

From such material, possibly, some of the great legends of history have been evolved. But there is nothing illusive about the existence of Brandon's first Chief of Police McMillan, who bought little Peter Hall's wheat for thirteen cents a bushel. The Chief was an able and conscientious public servant, who came to an untimely end.

One cold morning in January, 1884, I was passing Smart's hardware store when John Brown rushed out, saying: "Chief McMillan has shot himself." I found the Chief sitting on the chair, his arms hanging helplessly by his side. He was in great distress, and the hue of death was upon his face. He had been cleaning a rifle which he supposed was unloaded and had shot himself through his body just below the waist line. He died eighty minutes afterward.

The city had its share of crime, which was not very much. One occasionally came in contact with imported aspects of it. On a very cold winter's night, a large man, with a scar over his eye, and accompanied by a black collie dog, registered at the Kelly House. Later in the evening, he hired a rig from us, saying that he wished to warn a lady friend across the river that she was likely to be arrested. When the stableman wanted to close up and the stranger had not returned, he became anxious.

At last the stranger came back on horseback, saying he had broken the shafts of the cutter and wanted another

rig. The stableman hitched up a team, went across the river and, at request, stopped at the foot of the hill, where was a shanty belonging to a Dutchman. The stranger went in and was followed by the driver for comfort's sake. Nobody was there, for the proprietor seemed to have let suddenly. His watch was hanging on the wall, and his revolver was on the table.

The stranger kicked open a trunk, took out some bread and onions, prepared for a meal, and seemed quite at home. Through the window the stableman saw the city lights gradually go out. Nothing happened, but everything seemed queer. He collected four dollars from the stranger, and went to the city for help.

Returning, the stranger was found asleep. After considerable humoring he was persuaded to return and was left at the Grand Central Hotel. During the night he was arrested. Two revolvers were under his head. He was put in the jail, where the fire hall now is. The building was more like a box than a prison, being made of planks bolted together. Next day he was remanded till the warden of Stonewall Prison could arrive, who identified him as McGibbon who had drowned a squaw in the Lake of the Woods, and had shot a sixteen year old boy in Winnipeg.

In a few days McGibbon broke out of jail, hired a farmer to drive him to the boundary where, instead of paying him, he told him to go to blazes. Months after, he wrote to the Brandon Chief of Police saying he hoped the letter found the chief well, as it left him at present.

In jail with McGibbon was Pat Crogan who had drunk not wisely but too well. McGibbon offered to release Pat also, but, as Pat had only two more days of his sentence to put in, and as the punishment for breaking jail would surely be heavier than what he already had, he preferred to stay where he was.

There were other surprises for good people besides the discovery of a mysterious murderer. We are justly proud of the great hospital, from which the patients obtain so fine a view of the city and in which the matron for twenty-five years was Miss Birtles. Miss Birtles arrived in Brandon from England with her parents, brothers and sisters on the last evening in June. They heard that there was to be a processional celebration of Dominion Day; so they were up early for breakfast, to avoid the rush, and then went out to see the great sight. First they were moved with astonishment by a house moving on rollers, because a horse was walking around a windlass, pulling the house forward by a rope. Another curiosity of the town was the bold sign of Trotter, Wigle and Co., which, possibly, they thought was minus the "g" in the second name.

All morning they waited patiently for the great procession, spending most of their time on the corner of Sixth and Rosser. At last there appeared Fire Chief Wiswell, with his horse and buggy, then the hook and ladder, followed by the engine with Dad Crawford in charge, and the volunteer brigade with large helmets of read and black. The Birtles family thought this was very interesting for a start of the procession. But the procession was all start. The brigade was its alfalfa and omega.

The Birtles family settled finally at Alexander. Some of them wanted to return to England. Of all the strange things they heard and saw and did, nothing was so strange as a prophecy would have seemed if Miss Birtles had been told that for twenty-five years she would be matron of the Brandon General Hospital, and would send out scores of the finest nurses in the land, some of whom would relieve suffering in Europe during the most appalling war of history. Miss Birtles is enjoying her retirement at Alexander.

With two thousand of a population Brandon had three times as many newspapers as now. The Sun was the first, as was started by W. J. White, who eventually went to Ottawa in the service of the Immigration Department, and for many years was chiefly concerned in the promotion of immigration from the United States. He was one of the original choristers of the Methodist Church, and enjoyed a popularity all his own in town and country. The Times flourished, as well as circumstances would permit. Its creator was J. M. Robinson who one represented Portage la Prairie in the Legislature. The last time I saw him he was prospering exceedingly as the owner of large fruit farms at Narramatta, in the Okanagan Valley.

The champion of Conservative principles was the Mail, whose second editor was the most picturesque of Brandon's literary pioneers. He was Charles C. Cliffe, his second name not being generally known. He came from Gananoque, and boasted that he was the only Brandon editor with a university degree. He was a little man with a beard that was as abundant as his self-confidence and as untidy as his office. He ran for the Legislature as Conservative candidate in North Brandon in 1888. Of his entry upon the field, the irreverent White, in the Sun, said: "Christopher Columbus Cliffe has spread his whiskers to the breeze, and pranced into the field."

After he had done some canvassing, Cliffe announced that if he could rely upon the assurances he had received as well as he could take the assurers' word in the ordinary affairs of life, he would be elected by a majority of at least one hundred and fifty, whereon, the continuously disrespectful White and Sun declared that after the poll Christopher Columbus Cliffe would say with David of old, though not in haste, that all men are liars.

Cliffe did not win.

There is no use in pretending that the western climate for part of the year is not heard on man and beast. But it is a bracing climate; and even to non-natives is conducive to long life; if life be wisely lived. In Brandon are a couple of homesteaders, who expect soon to celebrate the sixty ninth anniversary of their wedding – Mr. and Mrs. Gibson. They farmed until about fifteen years ago at Alameda, in Saskatchewan's south-eastern corner. They live now with their daughter Mrs. J. W. Birchall, at whose wedding I stood up, in April 1887, with her sister as bridesmaid, now Mrs. Moore of West Virginia.

The New Year's dog races, on the ice are in their way, as well known as Brandon Fair. They began to be famous in the very early days. They were initiated by D. Anson Reesor and Art McLean, of whom Mr. Reesor, a genius at the jeweller's business, is with us still. The Reesors are a prominent family of Markham Township in Ontario; mostly farmers, but with abilities in many departments of business, social and public life. Anson Reesor is a genius because he has continued to flourish where many have finished.

Chapter XIII
CERTAIN BRANDON EMINENCES

The Brandon to which I came in March 1883 was a different Brandon for what it had been in April 1882. It didn't look finished; but it certainly carried a less transitory air. There were a few tents, even while the second winter of its history was still present. But there were also more substantial buildings; and with the country round looking more like real farming territory, the town itself was far more of a mercantile centre and far less of a frontier adventure than it had been less than a year before.

The first of everything, on the whole, was still there; though, of course, some of those who had come in at the beginning, had already moved on, which is invariably the case with a rail-head metropolis. But Brandon's immediate future was assured as far as the personnel of its citizenry could determine it. The boy is father to the man; and the stamp given to a city in its infancy remains upon its mature features.

At the base of everything solid was the great country for which Brandon was the market centre. When Roddick began settlement in the Brandon Hills, in '79, he believed his was the only farmhouse between the Assiniboine and the international boundary. The C.P.R. line was the sole modern artery of commerce from below parallel forty-nine to the North Pole. Wheat was hauled to Brandon from the southern frontier, and the northern limit of settlement, so that the one elevator that was built to receive it was so besieged by farmers' teams that some waited all day for

their turn to unload.

Being the market place for all supplies for so much country, Brandon was the Mecca of streams of horse and horned traffic, most likely larger than anything that has come to any market place in Canada since railways made it unnecessary for produce to be teamed into Toronto from around Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay. Neither Winnipeg nor Portage la Prairie ever had as much farming country directly tributary to it as Brandon did until branch railways began to remove the Pacific Avenue elevators, which, for several years, were our outstanding architecture.

This was not fully the case in the early spring of 1883; for settlement was still pouring in. But conditions had given Brandon a character, which it has never lost; and which, on the whole, it can be fairly said, it has not needed to outgrow. We may not be as metropolitan as we think we are, we may need to outgrow some small-town distinctions but we are not a small town, in mind, body or estate.

One doubts whether there ever was a new-born community in which law and the gospel had so much free course to run and be glorified as Brandon was in the eighteen eighties. Retrospectively, it seems as if the law overshadowed, because it embraced the gospel. The churches, particularly the Methodist and Presbyterian, were early and zealously on the ground. Actively in them were a galaxy of young lawyers, whose honors may have been equaled, but surely could not be excelled in any town of similar size anywhere. They had two relations to the law during the week – they practised it in their offices; and they practised the more difficult art of making it, outside their offices. If a sash-maker is a builder, because he makes sashes, politicians are lawyers, for they make laws, little as an election may resemble a court.

There were more lawyers than law business in Brandon forty years ago. Their almost multitudinous arrival was testimony to the universal expectation that the city foreshadowed by Sandford Fleming in 1880, was to be no mean city. Judge W. A. MacDonald of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, has named for me seven lawyers whose number he completed when he arrived on June 16th, 1882.

They knew they were casting their anchors into the promise of the future, more than they were putting their hands into the pockets of the present. The country was occupied by homesteaders. No great businesses were established. There were no estates to wind up; for the few grey men in the land were looking to acquire rather than to bequeath wealth. It was facetiously said that somebody would have to be murdered to start a cemetery. Litigation was scarce; transfers were few; and though living was fairly cheap, it was difficult professionally to secure.

If the lawyers were shepherded into the church flocks for consolation, they gravitated to politics for activity. If they had few clients to serve, they could always find a country to save. To their credit be it recorded, they did their share of country-saving. Four of the seven named by Judge MacDonald became ministers of the Crown, and the fifth – the Judge himself – leader of an Opposition which hoped to become a Government. Of the other two, the brothers Henderson, one has been city solicitor forty years, and the other became registrar of titles. As all seven stopped short of the premiership of Canada, none of Judge MacDonald's list may have fully come into his own; but what other seven new-comers to a town can be set forth in so distinguished an array as the seven barristers of Brandon?

The senior was Thomas Mayne Daly, Irish, of course, politician, equally of course; and the first mayor of the

city. His father, who also lived some years with him here, was an Ontario member of Parliament before and after Confederation. Mayne Daly was gentlemanly after the old school, a fluent, even an eloquent speaker, liked by everybody. Curiously, though living in Brandon, he entered the House of Commons for Selkirk, and became Minister of the Interior under Sir John Thompson and Sir MacKenzie Bowell.

When Sir Charles Tupper returned to Canada as a forlorn-hope Premier, Mr. Daly was given an immigration mission to Europe; and did not run for election in 1896. He moved to British Columbia, and later became Police Magistrate at Winnipeg. In 1908 he returned to public life as opponent of Clifford Sifton, whom he almost defeated.

The second lawyer, in seniority, mentioned by Judge MacDonald, was George Coldwell, who was Mr. Daly's partner for many years, and became Provincial Secretary in the Roblin Government, with which he went down in 1915, without losing the goodwill of his innumerable old friends.

Of Judge MacDonald himself, it can be said that no more public-spirited man ever dwelt in Manitoba. He was a Conservative, and much occupied with political service, to which he made many sacrifices, and from which he received few rewards while he remained in Manitoba. He failed of election against Clifford Sifton in the provincial election of 1888; but was returned as the first member for Brandon city in 1892, and became leader of the Opposition to Premier Greenway. He was defeated in 1893, by Charles Adams, now living opulently in Toronto; and in 1897 moved to Nelson in the Kootenay; thence to Vancouver in 1909; and was made a judge of the Supreme Court in 1913 – which he still adorns.

The Hendersons were unpolitical – H.E., the city solicitor, and P.G.A., the registrar of titles. They did not loom so large in the public eye, when elections brewed. They taught others the law, notably R.M. Matheson, who came from the farm to their office as a boy, and has been crown prosecutor for more than a quarter of a century.

When I settled in Brandon, the most conspicuous citizens were the Siftons, and the name never diminished – indeed, it became the most prominent of western family productions. The Merediths and Osler brothers were more numerous, than the two Sifton brothers; but one does not recall another instance in which a father and all his sons were called honorable, by virtue of appointment to high provincial office. Nor is it likely that the distinction will be capped, of a father and two sons coming together to a new town, the father already an ex-speaker of a legislature, and both his sons lawyers.

The ex-speaker, Mr. J.W. Sifton, brought his family to Manitoba in 1875 from London, Ontario. His father had come to Canada from Tipperary in 1832, the year before he was born. He farmed, and operated oil wells at Oil Springs in the early sixties; then owned oil wells at Paris; and formed the first trust in Canada – a combination of oil operators, with headquarters in London, where he was secretary-treasurer. For those days he made a great deal of money – a hundred thousand dollars was as bid as a million is now.

In Manitoba, he built parts of the C.P.R. – construction of which, eastward to Fort William, was under way in 1875 – and the telegraph line from Winnipeg to Fort Pelly. The first year he was in the province he was elected to the Legislature, and became Speaker.

In Brandon Mr. Sifton was a leading Methodist, and circulated the first petition in favor of prohibition. He was

also a leading Liberal, and was the first member elected to the Legislature for Brandon county, over six other candidates. His bill incorporating the City of Brandon, was passed on the last day of the 1882 session. After one term he was defeated by Mr. Woodworth – of whom something later. When Mr. Woodworth's legislative term was finished, Mr. Sifton's son, Clifford, entered politics, and became the most powerful figure in the Brandon region for twenty years.

Arthur and Clifford Sifton were in partnership. Though Arthur was the senior by over two years, the brothers fledged into lawyers almost simultaneously; and made their practising start at Brandon. They did not seem to court the courts, though they were always remarkably effective before the bench. They were marked by everybody for distinguished careers, from the beginning – and lived up to prophecies, as few bright young fellows do.

The brothers' partnership lasted three years, when it was dissolved because Brandon afforded insufficient scope for both. Arthur moved first to Prince Albert; then to Calgary, where he was partner with a barrister who migrated to California, whither also Arthur Sifton went, only to return to Calgary. After twenty years' practice he was appointed Chief Justice of the North West Territories, but not until he had been Treasurer in the Haultain Government at Regina. When the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were erected in 1905, Judge Sifton became Chief Justice of Alberta. Five years later he went to Edmonton as Premier, and in seven years more changed to Ottawa as Minister of Customs in the Union Government, which, with Sir Robert Borden and Mr. Rowell he represented at the Versailles Peace Conference. He died at Ottawa in 1920.

To become a chief justice at forty-five was surely distinction enough for one man. To sit in three different

Governments, of three different geographical areas, and to head one, was Arthur Sifton's unique record. He was called lazy by some of his intimates; but he could do more work with less apparent effort than most men with a reputation as very hard toilers. His father used to say he never seemed to study at college, but carried off more prizes than his brother obtained by persistent plodding.

Usually, his judgments were delivered as soon as the arguments were concluded. To write a judgment he would retire to his library, light his inevitable cigar, select two or three books for reference, find his way swiftly to what he wanted, and finish his finding in less time it would take most judges to turn up their authorities. He had a sure instinct for direction. Few jurists were so seldom appealed against, or had their judgments so infrequently reversed.

No doubt he gave his Brandon clients more than he got out of them; and, in that sense, may scarcely have been "made" in the city of his early trials. But it is always good for communities to reckon the eminences that have once dwelt among them. Even if Brandon did not give Arthur Sifton his larger distinctions, it likes to think that the Treasurer of the North West Territories, the Chief Justice of the North West Territories; the Chief Justice of Alberta, the Premier of Alberta; the Dominion Minister of Customs and one of Canada's representatives at Versailles, began his practice on Rosser Avenue, at Fourth Street, and was one of the first aldermen of the youngest and smallest city in Canada.

Clifford Sifton's association with Brandon was long and memorable. He was twenty-two when the firm of Sifton & Sifton put out its shingle. He was active in the Methodist Church. It is not widely known, but it is looked back upon with much gratification by some old-timers, including himself, I imagine, that some of his training as one of the

most effective speakers who ever took the platform, was gained as a Methodist local preacher, filling appointments in schoolhouses where afterwards he spoke for votes.

His political propensities had not largely unfolded in 1883 when first I used to see him in church taking up the collection in one aisle while his brother passed the plate in another. But he was soon busy politically, and rapidly shewed that quick, aggressive decisiveness which made him one of the most able, most powerful, and most feared statesmen who have moved from the provincial into federal and international spheres. It has been said by shrewd, widely experienced observers that Sir Clifford Sifton is the greatest combination of cold-blooded business man, machine politician, and statesman our country had produced. The estimate I believe to be fully justified. The combination may not draw upon its possessor deluges of affection, but it is remarkable, wherever it appears.

Those were young men's times, indeed; but many of the young easterners brought old men's politics with them – they were what their fathers had been, with usually not much more choice in their political affiliations than they had in their names. The imprint of partisan Ontario was all about Brandon. For a long time, it was rather taken for granted that the Conservative party was impregnable – especially in Dominion politics. But there was an aggressive young man in the hardware business on Rosser and Fourth, by the name of Smart, who had come out of Brockville, and had moved on to Brandon after a year in Winnipeg.

He was a Liberal, or Reformer as they were more commonly called in those remote ages. When a meeting of Reformers was held to discuss forming an association, opinion seemed to be in favor of not calling themselves by the Mackenzie and Blake name. Smart came out flatfooted

for boldness. Clifford Sifton backed him up. Timidity was forsworn – and, if you would see boldness justified of its children, remember that in 1886 Smart was provincial member for Brandon and provincial secretary for Manitoba, and that in 1888 Clifford Sifton joined him at Winnipeg as M.P.P. for North Brandon, and became attorney-general in 1891. Smart was twenty-eight when he became a legislator, and Sifton was twenty-seven.

Jim Smart was not a lawyer; but he was in the lawyer's class when it came to aptitude for public distinction. He was one of the first Brandon aldermen, at twenty-four, and at twenty-seven was mayor – a good stepping stone to the Legislature.

As if it were not sufficient for one young Brandon man to be in a government at twenty-eight, and another to be similarly exalted at thirty, while they were reflecting this double glory on their little city, T.M. Daly became the third cabinet member to dwell in our midst at the same time. Mr. Daly was Minister of the Interior, an office to which Clifford Sifton succeeded in 1896, when still but thirty-six years old, and already six years in a government. Mr. Smart was Mr. Sifton's deputy minister at Ottawa for eight years; and has been in the railway and steamship business in Montreal for twenty years.

The point of all this digression about the potential greatness that Brandon attracted to its very cradle is that, though only a few could become cabinet ministers and such, the town was singularly fortunate in the quality of its earliest inhabitants.

A cynic might make a Main Street out of the material that came in from almost every quarter of the globe; but the enduring truth is that the bold spirits who ventured into the new, the crude and the unknown, even if some of them had made no great successes whence they came, had the courage

and capacity to build a city literally from the ground up; which, of its size, is today the most distinguished-looking of the Canadian West; and the most solidly founded in a fertile territory as large as several European countries.

Nobody can view Brandon from the northern slopes of the Valley without instinctively paying tribute to its fathers; and the women who, by their side, braved hardships to which the modern miss is very lucky to be a stranger; though, for stamina's sake, it might be exceedingly well if the new generation had to bear the yoke so bravely carried by the old.

It doesn't follow always that those who reach the highest pinnacle are the most public-spirited men in the community. Mr. Smart, from a vivid memory of the earliest public life in Brandon, gives first place for public spirit to Mr. William Winter, who was one of the aldermen present at the first meeting of Brandon City Council on July 3rd, 1882 "in the schoolhouse," – a building which is now part of a store on Sixth Street.

Mr. Winter lived on Sixth Street in the Three Hundred block. By his house the first sidewalk was laid in the city – wooden, of course; for the concrete age had not then come in. The sidewalk being placed there does not mean that Mr. Winter was always pulling for something for himself. He was more concerned about the town than about anything else. He never made a great fortune – the most public-spirited men on the frontier seldom do. But he had great ideas about the growth of the country, and was quickly on the job to translate them into achievements.

He had more than Sandford Fleming's vision of a railroad centre developing on the Assiniboine River. While others talked about that sort of future, Mr. Winter began to organize for it. The Canadian Pacific had entered Brandon in the fall of 1881. The winter was very hard; but it was not

the winter of Winter's discontent. He summoned a meeting in a bedroom over a store, and with his friends organized The Brandon and Northern Railway Company. The leading citizens there assembled fully intended building at least two lines, to bring North and South together; for Brandon was the predestined spot at which the twain should meet.

The Northern Company was sufficient for a start. Its special altruistic mission was to console those who had been robbed of their certainty of the C.P.R. in the Little Saskatchewan Valley. What Rapid City and Minnedosa lost the B. & N. might restore. Its officers were duly elected; with Mr. Winter as general manager, he having been a ticket agent somewhere in the East. Authority was given him to print cards with his official title thereon. It is said by other officers of the company that the questionable prospects of such a pioneer bravery came home to the general manager of the Brandon and Northern, when managers of railways across the line did not see their way to exchange passes with him.

The situation is mildly reminiscent of the chief of a local line in Maine who asked Chauncey Depew, President of the New York Central, to exchange passes. Driven to admit that his line was only six miles long, and asked whether he really thought a six-mile line might fairly expect an even exchange with a system five hundred times as long, he replied.

"Well, your road may be that much longer than mine; but it ain't a d. . .d bit wider."

The Brandon and Northern organization meeting was its own first and last. It was a sign of the unconquerable optimism of the West which may recede like a tide but comes back in a flood. It was kindred with the hope which eternally springs in every species of pioneer breast. It was born and buried at the period when, in Winnipeg such

great railway systems were projected as the Oregon and Transcontinental, which petered down to the Souris branch of the Canadian Pacific.

Later, at Brandon we actually had the Great North West Central, which was to connect us with Prince Albert, but which after crawling fifty miles out, stalled until was gathered into the ample bosom of the Canadian Pacific, to feed upon, and to feed it.

Chapter XIV
OTHER BRANDON EMINENCES

One day some genius in handling facts, in emitting humor, and in discerning community psychology will give us a book shewing how the West is first, last and all the time, going, going, going, and is never gone. Everything hinges, sometime, on the ability to get somewhere. That is why Brandon grew out of the difficulties of crossing the river at Grand Valley; and it explains the special interest that links private enterprises, and public service with such an affair as the bridging of the Assiniboine so that Brandon might fitly serve her northern tributary territory.

The homesteader of the quarter section immediately east of First Street was Joseph Woodworth, who also kept store with a Mr. Roundsfield on the east side of First Street. Mr. Woodworth built the first bridge across the river at First Street; at a cost of thirty thousand dollars, expecting to be recouped by the ten cents toll per person, and twenty-five cents per team. The bridge was opened on a Sunday in September 1882, with a big crowd to see the event. A small party among the spectators consisted of Mr. Watt, now of Alexander, Phil MacKenzie, the blacksmith, a Mr. McLean, and Crockett and Jones, who were living in a tent near MacKenzie and Russell's blacksmith shop on Sixth Street. Watt asked the formal Englishman in charge of collections how much it was to cross.

"Ten cents, sir," was the emphatic reply.

"Is it the same for a man and his pack?"

"Yes, sir."

Nearby was Joe Quinn, baker Quinn's boy; who like many others, had more desire than ability to put the bridge under his feet. Watt picked up Joe, paid the toll, pick-a-backed him across, and presently returned the same way.

Woodworth was Mayne Daly's unsuccessful opponent in the first mayoralty election, in that summer of 1882, shortly after the city had been incorporated. For the 1883 mayoralty William Winter was the successful candidate, no one thinking any the worse of him because the project of the Brandon and Northern had not even brought him a harvest of passes from American roads. Woodworth did not try for the mayoralty again, because a provincial election happening along, he opposed the re-election of J.W. Sifton – and, to everybody's surprise, defeated him.

On public grounds Woodworth was not as well qualified for high office as the senior Sifton. But he was a fine-looking, hearty man, with black side whiskers and flowing moustache, a great mixer and free spender. He enjoyed his popularity, which did not diminish during his four sessions at Winnipeg. He made two hundred thousand dollars out of the sale of his land for city lots; and cheerfully confessed his wealth. His seal overcoat was the envy of many a lover of fine raiment.

To one modest new-comer, schooled in the rigid academies of thrift, Woodworth is memorable as the revealer of what charge accounts might mean. He was the first man I ever heard say, after giving an order in a store, "Charge it." He had his own ideas of how to give a dollar so as to get three. It was that sentiment, rather than a passion for incorruptible justice, which led him to give a free site for the court house, where the jail now stands. He believed the court house would attract the lawyers to its neighborhood as their residential district. Where lawyers flocked, he thought, other rich men would flow, and the

price of lots would rise. But the lawyers in those days were not fattening on fees; and the Woodworth idea had to join many others about the profitability of liberality.

This early builder and legislator came to a tragic end by drowning in a small boat in the Southern States, some years after he left Brandon.

There was a different order of impressiveness about Captain Vivian, perhaps the most spectacular of the earlier Englishmen who came to see and conquer the West. He was a kind-hearted man, possibly a typical example of how the orthodoxies of aristocracies spoil otherwise good men for contact with mortals who have not been taught that the chief end of man is to look down upon or up to some other man.

Captain Vivian always wore a monocle; was as lordly as the lordliest of the branch of the Vivian family to which he was believed to belong – the Lords Vivian among whom Crespigny was also a dignified baptismal name. J.R. Foster who was first chief of police and then a provincial detective of high degree, used to tell how, while in Winnipeg, Captain Vivian once took a bath in seven hundred and fifty dollars' worth of champagne, and invited his other sober friends to see him in it. He preferred that they should look upon the wine when it was red rather than that he should pollute his skin with water from the Red.

Captain Vivian homesteaded the north east quarter of section fourteen, and within a year had money for more champagne baths, if he had cared for them; for his prospective farm was swallowed up in the city. He had kept a small shop; for attendance upon which he was unsuited. So was the young fellow countryman he put in charge.

Like others of his stripe the captain left us after a few years; wherein he was different from another Englishman

who was for several decades an asset to Brandon and whose widow, Mrs. Pilling, is with us yet.

The Pillings, with Mr. Pilling's two sisters, came from England in May 1881. Leaving the ladies in Winnipeg, Mr. Pilling travelled with a party by the Willow Quill trail, which came through Milford, then the land office, on the Assiniboine; and Souris city, which is now Wawanesa. Of the country he said the trail for miles was under water, often to four feet deep. They met two Ontario men, hoofing it for home; and saying that they had been all through the West and had not seen an acre of good land. The Pilling party was making for Grand Valley, and skirted the Brandon Hills and called at Squire Doran's. When they arrived in the Assiniboine Valley they found the Brandon townsite being laid out; and abandoned the intention to settle at Grand Valley.

In the party was Mr. J.W. Horne, afterwards very well known as a real estate operator here and in Vancouver. Better informed than most, he had in Winnipeg bought two Brandon lots, for $350. apiece, on the south east corner of Tenth and Princess. Mr. Pilling also bought lots on the corner of Thirteenth and Rosser, where the Bellevue Block now stands. He knew that the immigration hall would be east of the railway station; saw only one boarding house in that vicinity, and that on Sixth Street; so he decided to build a hotel there, which became the Royal. He bought the lumber for the hotel from Mr. Whitehead, for $60. a thousand square feet and planned the building himself.

There were no sidewalks; and the only building between Sixth and Thirteenth was James Johnston's butcher shop on Twelfth. Pilling slept the first night in a wagon box. While the hotel was building he drove to Portage la Prairie, and took train thence to Winnipeg to bring his wife and two sisters, all of whom were extremely nervous crossing the

river on the Grand Valley ferry. The first English church service in Brandon was held in the Royal Hotel dining room with kegs and planks for seats. It was conducted by Mr. Fortier the postmaster; and the congregation was not large. The first girl born in Brandon was the Pillings' daughter, now Mrs. Joe Hill, now of Alexander. The first boy was Brandon Lawson, son of the first Methodist manse.

Among the first guests at the Royal Hotel were the Hon. John Norquay, the half-breed future premier of Manitoba; and Sam Bower. They were both very large men, each weighing three hundred pounds; and, owing to a press of business they slept in one bed. Mr. Norquay came for a meeting in the contest which resulted in the election to the Legislature of Mr. J. W. Sifton.

Alderman Pilling was a good business man, a hotelkeeper rather than a liquor seller, though in those days the bar was an essential part of every hotel. He was also a successful live stock auctioneer, and probably knocked down more teams of oxen than any man in New World history. He it was who originally proposed changing the Brandon fair from the first days of October to the last week in June – perhaps the wisest thing ever done as a community innovation to the city. An early October fair gave time for all the fruits of the earth to be gathered before the crowds gathered themselves. But October is a less gay month than June; and the Pilling change did very much to ensure the enduring prosperity of Central Manitoba's greatest show.

Brandon never had a more valuable citizen than Dr. Fleming, after whom the Fleming school was named. He was the first chairman of the school board. His devotion to the city's interest was exactly like his zeal for his own family's well-doing. Thomas Hopwood, who farms out south, and takes an active part in Brandon fair, was a boy of fifteen when he sat on the bank watching Dr. Fleming

digging his cellar at the corner of Eighth and Rosser. Tommy said:

"It's a strange thing to see a doctor shovelling gravel and digging a cellar." The doctor straightened up and, leaning on his shovel, answered:

"I'm thankful I am able to do it; for many are not able; and more wouldn't do it."

The doctor built a frame house over that cellar, which was afterwards moved to the Three Hundred block on Tenth Street. Finally he built for his home Louise Villa on Seventh. He was especially proud of it having the highest roof of any house in the city.

He was more than delighted when the C.P.R. monopoly was bought out by the Dominion Government, as the outcome of the battle of Fort Whyte, just outside Winnipeg, when the C.P.R. resisted the crossing of its tracks by a provincially-inspired line. To mark the significance of the event, he had a marble slab set into the east side of his house; commemorating, in bold relief "1888, The Year of Provincial Liberty and Progress." In an age when, everywhere, tablets are being placed on buildings where interesting events have occurred, one cannot help regretting that the present owner of Louise Villa has chiselled off the only monument in stone that recalled a phase of Manitoban history that can never be repeated.

Dr. Fleming's son, J.W. Fleming, who became the youngest mayor of the city, and is now chairman of the Civil Service Commission of Manitoba, had his father's gift for practical usefulness. He was the leading transferman of the city. As a boy he earned this first money to buy his first lot (and thus foreshadowed his career as a real estate operator) by delivering baggage to different parts of the city with his toboggan, often making two or three trips to

carry his charges from the station to the little cabin homes of boarding tents on the hillside.

He was also one of several boys who were employed for a dollar and a half a day by J.A. Brock, homesteader and Brandon's first photographer, to gather maple seeds along the river bank, from which Mr. Brock grew the first maples that adorn the city's streets today, as no other streets in Western Canada are adorned.

The farthest-reaching Brandon industry is the milling business that was started by Alexander Fisher; is now the Western Canada Flour Mills, and the first president of which was Mr. Andrew Kelly, now retired in Winnipeg. Mr. Kelly, as mayor, gave the casting vote which built the City Hall where it is now. For many years the mill manager here was Mr. John Maxwell, who has been a Brandonian almost as long as there has been a Brandon. He began as a workman and you could set your watch by the time he arrived as the mill. In public life his outstanding service has been given on the School Board.

In the early days, when the Indians came to town after receiving their treaty money, and held pow-wows on the market square, Mr. Maxwell would give them a few sacks of flour. The Indians, to show their respect for him, once gathered at the mill in hundreds, with their plaid blankets, feathers and fringed leggings, formed a traditional circle, held a regular pow-wow, beating the tom-tom and stamping their feet, while strings of bells some of which were very like thimbles, tinkled upon their legs. When Doukhobors were newly in the country and batches of them worked on railway construction to keep the others going before their crops amounted to anything, their representatives would leave their money with Mr. Maxwell, long before their flour orders were filled.

One of the earliest and most important Government officials of the Brandon district, which was erected over an immense territory, was Sheriff Clement who, with his large family, came hither from Shoal Lake where, in advance of the railway, he homesteaded after a long drive across the prairie from Winnipeg.

The farmers of the Shoal Lake territory became much perturbed because the Government raised the price of pre-emptions. Lest some reader be unaware of the conditions of land settlement long ago, it may be explained that the homesteader of a quarter section had the right to pre-empt another quarter section, which he could buy at $2.50 per acre, when he had fulfilled his three years' duties on the homestead, and received his patent for it.

The Shoal Lake homesteaders sent Mr. Clement to Ottawa, where his remonstrances were quite successful. Then the neighbors wished him to be their representative in the Legislature. At first he refused, but when a convention that was called at his suggestion, insisted on nominating him, he accepted; was elected, and drove to Winnipeg for the session.

Later, on his wife's insistence, he let Premier Norquay know that he was willing to accept permanent office, and was appointed first Sheriff of the Brandon district. Mrs. Clement was of the noblest pioneering quality – one of the women who boldly faced the most disconcerting situations. She was born in Ireland and had lived in Cookstown, Ontario. She remembered when Toronto business houses began to overflow onto Yonge Street, and recalled seeing the first store opened there. Her son Steve, still practising law with his brother Robert, was mayor, and defeated Sir J.A.M. Aikins in the election to the Legislature during which Sir James – then unknighted – led the Conservative party. These two candidates were

the best of friends, for Steve Clement had studied law in the Aikins office.

The family had more to do with politics than most of us. There is a story to the effect that a small company of prominent politicians asked Attorney-General Sifton to dismiss Sheriff Clement because they had ascertained that he had forty thousand dollars on deposit at the bank, and their sense of virtue was grievously outraged by such riches being at the disposal of anybody in a country which was not then flowing with milk or money. Mr. Sifton promptly said he couldn't dismiss a public official without charges being laid and proved.

As the visitors had nothing to go upon except their own sense of the sheriff's financial superiority, the incident never became official. The next time Mr. Sifton was the sheriff, he inquired about the huge bank deposit; and found that it was there, all right, only it was public money, duly held in public trust.

Currie's Landing, six miles down the river, and below the Grand Rapids of the ancient maps, has frequently been named here, as the terminus of the prairie navy, before railway construction and land settlement led the sternwheelers to climb to the front at Fort Ellice and Fort Pelly. The landing was named after Mr. Currie, who started a store there in 1879; and, for awhile saw visions and dreamed dreams of the busy hive of commerce the place was to become. He shipped the first export of wheat from the Big Plain in the fall of 1881. It went to Cornwall Ontario; and the freight on it was a dollar and twelve cents per hundredweight. Anything that was grown before that by the first settlers like the Roddicks was needed for food and seed.

Mr. Currie was fifty years old when he set up in business at the Landing; and employed Joe Blight to look after

supplying the steamers with wood, which was hugely piled on the bank. Joe has told me of the hundreds of cords of wood he carried from land to the decks, on his back, of how he slept out of doors, most of the year; and how in winter, provisions would run short; and would have to be personally hauled from Portage la Prairie. Even in summer he has had roast gopher for dinner; which was tender eating.

Mr. Currie survives in Brandon at ninety six years of age, having done his duty as an insurance agent; and being so far removed from primitive conditions that his chief complaint in life is that there is no loud speaker in church so that he can hear the sermon.

Wheat, in small quantity, was the first export. It was also the first exhibit at the first Brandon fair, and also in very small quantity. The day being fixed, every farmer relied on every other farmer to send in an exhibit, with the result that the directors had to borrow grain from the mill, and make the best of a competition where no competition could really be. Still, though there was no doubt about the propriety of the first award; there was considerable discussion as to whether second and third prizes ought not to have been reversed.

The grain fair was a different affair form the first stock fair, which took place on October 3rd 1883. The best showing was made by John Bradley's dray team; Mr.VanTassell's shorthorn cattle; and Dan McQuaig's Percheron stallion "Black Duke." Dan used to say he loved his mother first, and his horse next – which was true.

Young Jim Smart was one of the moving spirits for the fair; and made the daring proposition to spend fifty dollars on fire crackers. It was done, after he had overcome objections to such prodigality with the remark that those who didn't come to see them, would be sorry; and would surely be on the job next year.

The October fair speedily became popular. The hotels would be crowded; and the rigs which carried visitors from downtown to the fair grounds at fifteen cents a fare, each earned about forty dollars a day.

Brandon fair has become even more than a provincial institution – one should say fairs; for the winter exhibition is in a class by itself in cities of Brandon's class – I mean as to total population; for in other respects there are no cities in Brandon's class. Living or gone, directors of the fair's earlier years can see of the travail of their souls, and be satisfied. Many of them gave not only their time and labor, but their personal notes for liabilities which sometimes it seemed, could never be met.

Chapter XV
THE CURE OF SOULS

One sometimes wonders whether, if another great empty space of Canadian country had to be settled, the cure of souls would be as evident a department of pioneering as distinguished the earlier days of western Manitoba. More Christian agencies might be at work, but whether they would fill as large a proportion of the community's life is perhaps questionable in an age where every farmer takes a daily paper, has a telephone, and has bought or is going to build a radio set.

In the last century the churches had less abundant resources than they have now, but they made the most of what they had, and gave many magnificent pastors and teachers to the West.

From Grand Valley, before a woman had arrived, John McVicar went one day to Tanner's Crossing for the mail, leaving his brother Dougal to do the cooking, and straighten house. After dark Dougal saw a light on the distant hillside. Thinking it was his brother unexpectedly returning, he waved his lantern after the manner of a trainman signaling to his engineer. The light on the hill swung answeringly, but instead of brother John coming to the river it was a couple of Methodist preachers, the Rev. Thomas Lawson and the Rev. Mr. Halstead, driving a team and buckboard. While Mr. Halstead went to the stack two miles away to get hay for the team, Mr. Lawson enjoyed the biscuits that McVicar had made out of water and flour.

But, though these heralds of the Cross were prospecting spiritually, in 1878, it was Roddick, the preacher turned farmer, who gave to this section of the country its first real ministrations of the Word, for which, as far as I know, he never received payment in cash. He felt himself well rewarded by the appreciation of those who sat under him.

If Mr. Roddick had been a great preacher, the regular pastorate might have held him in the far east. He was a good average in discourse, but far above the average in character and devotion to the common weal. Like most men who speak to the public, he was apt to use some phrases more frequently than others; though he never was stereotyped, like a certain elder, who shall be nameless, and who led family worship, whoever was by.

A visiting minister, whose knees were sore, whose patience was all but exhausted, and who asked the elder's eldest son if the prayer were not nearly finished, was answered, as the boy roused himself from lethargy; "Has he got to the Jews yet?"

Being told that he had not, the boy whispered "When he gets to the Jews he's half way through."

Our friend Roddick was wont, in scriptural phrase, to liken the grace of God to dew on the mown grass and, though he knew it not, the irreverent in the country-side spoke of him as "Dew-on-the-mown-grass."

Mr. Roddick was as strictly orthodox in his views as he was strictly Sabbatarian in his behavior. He was as grieved when, on the way to conduct service at Grand Valley, he saw his neighbor Doran ploughing, as he was when his friends decided to cross the river on the Sunday when five of them were almost drowned from the wagon box. But squire Doran told the sadly questioning prophet that he intended to finish that particular piece of breaking before Sunday.

Mr. Roddick preached on the Carberry plain one Christmas Eve, and was very anxious to get home that night for Christmas. Welsh Nellie, his mare, was a brave and tough beast; but his jumper sleigh came to grief when he was past Archie Nicol's place at Big Boggy Creek eight miles northeast of Grand Valley. He went back to Nicol's, where with Archie he tried to mend the sleigh.

Archie's cheeks were frozen, for the thermometer was sixty below. So Mrs. Nicol brought them into the house where, by the kitchen fire's aid, with Mrs. Nicol holding the lantern, the jumper was repaired. Mr. Roddick declined to stay for the night. The rest of his journey into the Brandon Hills was the coldest in his experience. He attributed his arrival late at night to Providence plus Welsh Nellie – and regarded the risk as an ordinary incidental to divine service.

An example and pioneer in life, Mr. Roddick was also something of a pioneer in death. When age grew upon him he returned to Nova Scotia, leaving his family in the Brandon Hills. He could not stay there with complete content, and returned in the summer of 1914. He preached in the church of which he was founder and pillar, in the spirit of Nunc Dimittis.

He died in Nova Scotia, but his body was brought to be laid in the midst of his own people in the lovely country which he was the first to redeem from the uselessness of solitude. It was said at one time that half the traffic across Northumberland Strait was of bodies being brought from far countries to be laid in Prince Edward Island. To return to the West for sepulture was something new. Perhaps, if Mr. Roddick had not preached at Grand Valley, and so supplied a need almost before it was felt, a church might have been built there – but it is vain to speculate about such a matter.

Last summer, Mr. Joe Coxe, whose parents homesteaded three miles south-west of Brandon and sold their farm for $200. an acre, told me of being much struck with the appearance of Grand Valley as he came over the hill from Rapid City. A young Mr. Speer, who had a lumber yard at Grand Valley arranged seats out of his stock on the Sunday evening, and preached a sermon to the few people who assembled. Mr. Speer afterwards farmed at Douglas, and for many years before his death was in the Land Titles Office at Brandon.

Mr. Coxe by the way, says that the first shanty at Brandon was on the riverside and was built by Whitehead and Myers, the lumber merchants, and that it was in this place that the Hon. T. Mayne Daly slept his first night in Brandon.

Looking for land, compelled to camp at nightfall, and having no place to tie his horses to, Mr. Coxe put stones in a bag, and tied them to that. During the night the bag got worn, the stones fell out and away the horses went, and were caught eight miles west of the present city. Having found his horses, Mr. Coxe was lost. He met an ox-team driven by Fred Chesley of Griswold who was going to Grand Valley for lumber. Chesley is still on the farm and very successful.

Mr. Coxe tells how his mail was handed out by Mr. McVicar from the upstairs window at the Grand Valley Post Office, where the water was six feet deep. He paid fifty cents to cross the ferry to get his letters, and seventy-five cents for the return trip.

Hearing of a man being drowned, Coxe and a friend went down the river to Currie's Landing, without finding trace of a tragedy. There they were told that someone had seen a dead man higher up the stream. They rode back several miles to find a post in the river bank that

was used to snub the boat to, and was called a dead man.

The Rev. Mr. Lawson, who appeared so early on the Grand Valley scene, was the pioneer preacher of Brandon. He held his first service out doors. It was raining, and Lee, the harness-maker, held an umbrella over Mr. Lawson's head and started the hymn while the rain descended. Only a few men were there to join in the worship. After that, service was held for some time in a tent. Mr. Lawson built his first church, a low building, on Sixth Street, about the middle of the One Hundred block, on the west side. The seats were two by ten planks, without backs. No gray-haired men were in the congregation, nor any ladies, for some time. The first organist was James Smart, whom we have already seen, and was destined to be four times mayor of the city; but the regular organist, when things had settled down, was Kitty Lee.

From the beginning, as became the traditional Methodist distinction, Mr. Lawson's church was strong on making a joyful noise before the Lord. The first choir-leader was Mr. Lamont, afterwards Dr. Lamont. The village blacksmith, Phil MacKenzie was in the choir; and in turn came to lead it.

The first social gathering in connection with the church had a curious connection with a prank that was played upon Mrs. S.S. Simpson, who lived on Fifth Street between Princess and Lorne. She had a flock of chickens. Certain young men who worked nearby, thinking they would like pot-pie, killed some of her chickens, only to find they had picked trouble with the feathers. If they let them fly around, Mrs. Simpson would know what had happened, so it was decided to burn them in the forge, which was a real give-away, for the smell of the consuming down imparted the truth to Mrs. Simpson.

She was a forgiving soul. In absolving the offenders, she induced them to promise to help with the church tea meeting by bringing a cake. As they were bachelors she thought this was a retribution; but Phil MacKenzie smiled a smile which has not come off to this day; and decided to do the thing in noble style.

At Quinn's bakery he ordered a five-storey cake with "M. R." iced on it, signifying MacKenzie and Russell, the blacksmith firm.

It was a great surprise for the ladies when the lordly cake arrived. Like the best wine, it was kept till last, and brought a handsome sum at auction, each attender at the tea party getting a piece. Phil MacKenzie entered into the choirmastership, without any odour of singeing feathers upon his reputation.

A cynic once said that the preaching of more red-hot sermons on eternal punishment in the first church built in Brandon might, perhaps, have kept it warm in winter, for nothing else could.

Mr. Lawson's successor was the Reverend J.W. Woodsworth, D.D. – an excellent pastor, and for many years the joyful father of the Rev. J.S. Woodsworth, who is still Labor Member of the House of Commons for Winnipeg; and has travelled as far beyond the faith of his forebears as the East is from the West. Many a time have I seen Dr. Woodsworth conduct service in his fur coat with the collar about his ears to keep them from freezing, while the women in the congregation held their feet off the floor to evade the wintry blast which swept the arctic floor.

However cold the Sabbath, you could see Mrs. Woodsworth bringing her five children to church, the future M.P., about ten years of age, amongst them, and giving no sign of the revolutionary quality that was to make him exchange the Methodist ministry for a longshoreman's job

in Vancouver, for a prosecution during Winnipeg's lurid strike of 1919; and for the advocacy of strange, almost communistic views on platforms and in Parliament during these latter days.

The United Churchman of the West may be forgiven for discovering in the conditions of prairie life and the character of the pioneers' piety, a goodly share of the explanation of the new thing in church life and government which Canada has given to the world in 1925, through the fusion of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches. No doubt, the earnest ministers and devoted laymen who came to the West in early days were as devoted to the orthodoxies of theology and polity as were the good pastors they left behind them in the East and across the sea. But children of the same Father, thrown into new and isolative circumstances, discover that rigid insistence on second-rate things which divide, is nothing compared with the blessedness of brethren dwelling together in unity.

The prairie was the home of union churches long before church union began to be debated in church courts. The little Methodist tabernacle in Brandon was a union church; for, when the Presbyterians began their work, it was to it they gladly came, because it was gladly offered for Presbyterian services.

The Church of England in Canada, we have already seen, enjoyed its first service in Brandon in the dining room of the Royal Hotel, built by Mr. Pilling. Mr. Fortier, the postmaster, who conducted the first service, was a licensed lay reader, and was the first churchwarden. Unlike the first Methodist meeting, the original Anglican service was attended by several ladies – Mrs. Fortier, Mrs. Pilling, Mrs. Pilling's sisters and several others. But it was not till several months later that an Anglican minister was allocated to Brandon. On the first of January, 1882, the

Reverend James Boydell was appointed missionary to the Brandon district. In his age, Canon Boydell wrote me from Sudbury some reminiscence of those early days, which tell their own story:—

"I arrived early in January, by the St. Paul and Emerson Railway, in Winnipeg, stayed there a week and the proceeded to my charge of Brandon and parts adjacent, including Rounthwaite and Souris to the south, Minnedosa to the north, and Oak Lake to the west. Brandon then contained about five or six hundred people, many of the inhabitants living in tents, others in such boarding places as they could catch hold of, including shacks of various architectural designs and dimensions.

"I was fortunate in obtaining a fairly comfortable room in a house on Rosser Avenue. A boom was on in full blast, and hotel accommodation was scarce and very dear. A fellow clergyman and his wife called at the house were I was located, on a very cold night – thirty below zero. The house was full, some lying in their furs on the floors, and in the passageways. The proprietor, a hospitable man, said he regretted his inability to find a place for the strangers; told them to return, in unable to find shelter elsewhere, and he would put them up, somehow. They came back shortly; and the two very weary people slept on the floor that night in their furs, and were thankful to find a shelter at that. If I had known of their plight, I would most assuredly have shared my accommodation with them.

"Nothing but lots was thought of or talked about day in and out. I was perhaps an almost solitary exception, not because I was a parson, but because my pocket was empty.

"In the spring of 1882, I was fortunate enough to secure a pair of long rubber boots form the store of my friend Mr. Bower, of Bower & Co. They extended quite a few inches

above my knee, and were kept in position by rubber straps, so that, in the event of my getting beyond the depth of my knees in mud, I would still have ample protection. I frequently found myself quite up to high mud mark, at my knee joints – and this on Rosser Avenue, the swell street of the town.

"The Imperial Bank required a safe, which was conveyed along Rosser Avenue in a cart drawn by two pair of oxen. They were mired axle deep, near the bank; and it was with no ordinary effort that the freight was delivered. To the great credit of the town authorities, it must be said that by the following spring a lady might have walked over the same places in fashionable shoes, and taken no damage.

"My duty carried me to Souris, then a very small settlement on the river. There was not a shack between Brandon and Souris until you came to Rounthwaite, where I had a small church. The small hotel would be filled when I arrived at Souris, and all the rooms crowded with prospectors looking for farms. Nevertheless, a small room was always kept for the prophet. Many a time I arrived stiff and cold, after a thirty-six mile drive, with the temperature at twenty-five or thirty below zero. I would then walk on snow shoes from house to house to visit my scattered sheep in the wilderness, and was always warmly welcomed.

"I was present in Brandon when the first fire occurred after the installing of the first fire engine, and assisted in pulling it out into the street.

"Water for drinking was distributed from a water cart in winter, an arduous task. Milk was bought in the frozen solid, by the pound. Fuel sold at what we would, even in these days, call high prices – anthracite, $25. per ton; bituminous $14 or $15, wood poles, $8 or $10. per load. So it cost something to keep warm.

"I lived for some time in an attic over Mr. Daly's office,

then for almost a year in a tar-papered shack, twelve by fourteen, where I was more comfortable then I have since been in many more pretentious abodes.

"The first Anglican Church, St. Matthews, was built during my residence. I remained its first rector until I removed to Bracebridge, Muskoka, at the end of June, 1885, just after the Riel Rebellion, during which we cheered, and fed the troops as they came through on the C.P.R. During this interim the townspeople slept with rifles at their bedsides and were prepared to retire to the court house in case of disturbance."

The first Catholic services in Brandon were held in Mr. Ezekiel Evans' house, Mr. Evans being a Methodist. The building is still there, at Sixth and Princess, and devoted to Celestial cleansing. Then, in a tent on the river flats, Father Bandin held services once each month. Later, a small church was built at the corner of Second Street and Lorne Avenue, under the supervision of Archbishop Tache. Attached to it were rooms for the first resident priest, Father Robilliard. This servant of God and the people planted the first trees in Brandon between Third and Fourth Streets, along Lorne Avenue.

Cities, like many observant families, reflect the historical period in which names were given to places and persons. Princess, Lorne, Louise and Victoria four avenues next each other, memorialize the Marquis of Lorne and his wife Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria, in whose viceroyalty Brandon appeared upon the map.

That the Presbyterians, being the second on the ground, used the first Brandon Methodist church for their early services was an indication of the spirit of union rather than of union itself. Out in the country there was organic union in several places. For example, the church which was built as the outcome of a spontaneous desire for religious worship

on the shoulder of the hill between the MacMillans' houses east of the crossing of the Little Saskatchewan, in the Assiniboine Valley, was used alternately by Methodists and Presbyterians. To a considerable extent the congregations which attended did not discriminate denominationally between the preachers, though perhaps sometimes the Presbyterians made more effort to hear the disciple of John Knox than to listen to a follower of John Wesley.

A regular attender at this church during 1887-88 says that, over the period he heard regularly four preachers, two Methodists and two Presbyterians, and specially, one Presbyterian, Dr. Robertson, the Superintendent of Missions in the West, whose fame will be fragrant as long as Canadian Presbyterian history is read.

The regular Presbyterians were Lang and Patterson, and the Methodists Davis and Sedgwick. Patterson was Scotch, very devoted to the psalter, and read long, dry sermons from a cloth-bound book. During the summer the McConachies were visited by their brother, a Presbyterian minister from Ontario, his wife and their two little boys. One a hot Sunday afternoon, the minister's boys sat on the edge of the platform, upon which the preacher conducted service. Mr. Patterson's text was "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." After prosing along for about half an hour, he paused long than customary with him and the elder little McConachie cried: "Are you done?" He wasn't.

By way of coincidence, my friend recalls that the first time he heard Robertson, Patterson, Sedgwick and Lang preach, each man took the same text – "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

The youngster who was wearied of discourse on Sabbath observance is not the only hearer in the West who offered a remark of his own to the preacher. When we were at Oak Lake, getting under way for stringing the telegraph wire

into the illimitable West, service was held on Sunday by a missionary named MacLeod, who was a better preacher than he was a judge of human nature, for he did not have the knack for getting along with the boys. He held service in the station house, the only building in the place. During the sermon, one of the men happened to look at his watch. MacLeod, thinking this was done to annoy himself, and, perhaps to interrupt the meeting, sharply criticized the offender who, at once spoke up:

"It's none of your damn business how often I look at my watch," and he immediately left the building; pausing at the door, to turn and say to the minister:

"I do hate to hear the gospel tore up the back like that."

Chapter XVI
LIGHTER SIDES OF FAITH AND GRIEF

Weddings are, of course, a large part of religious ministrations, though they do not always occur in an atmosphere of ecclesiastical solemnity. Hotels in this respect were, in a way, antechambers of the church, because they became a sort of rialto of courtship. They were about the only places where a young man from the plains could speak to young women, principally those who waited on the dining room tables.

It was not a singular thing for a couple to meet, perhaps at dinner, and be engaged by evening. There were cases in which a man had not money enough to go back east for his sweetheart; and others wherein a girl came to marry a man for whom, at renewed sight, her affection disappeared. All romances, though, did not cluster around hotels.

A pair of lovers quarreled in the Old Land. The man emigrated to Western Canada, took up land near Brandon, and kept bachelor's hall for several years. As far as the neighbors knew, he was a confirmed bachelor who cared nothing for feminine society. One spring he hear of a neighbor a few miles away who had good seed wheat to sell, and thought he would drive over and buy some. He met the neighbor outdoors, and learned that the wheat was not cleaned. However, he bought a load, and agreed to help clean it. By the time the seed was passed through the mill, bagged and loaded, it was noon and the neighbor asked him to dinner.

At first he hesitated, being little used to the company of women. Besides, he was in his rough clothes. Still, it would be late by the time he got home and, to save cooking his own belated dinner in his own house, he decided to accept the offer. While they were feeding the horses, their conversation drifted to where each had come from. They hailed from places that were not far apart in Scotland.

When they were ready to sit down to table, a young woman visitor to the house appeared from the adjoining room. There was an unnecessary introduction. She was the girl he had quarreled with, and left years before. Before he started home with his seed grain, they had named their nuptial day.

The first wedding in Brandon was provoked by an offer by the municipal council of a lot to the first bride and groom. For some time the air was full of rumors which led to nothing. Finally it was announced that a marriage was arranged between a Mr. Robins and a woman called English Nell. No questions were asked whether it was a love match, but most folks were satisfied that it was principally to get the city lot. Marriage is a lottery, anyway.

The news of the ceremony spread very fast through the tented town, and most of the boys were anxious to see the fun. The wedding was to take place in Barton's City Hotel. The best man was a Dutchman who ran a barber shop. Approaching the minister somehow the bridal party got mixed, and the groomsman stood beside the bride. The minister laid his hands on their shoulders with the intention of having them step a little further forward. The Dutch barber looking up saw at once he was in the wrong place, and as the preacher touched him, he said, vehemently: "Not by a damned sight."

The right man came forward and the ceremony was performed. Then the congregation began to sing: "The

animals came in two by two" and "One more river to cross." The crowd followed the newly-weds to the lot, across the river, where the city council delivered the certificate of title to Mr. and Mrs. Robins.

Some time afterwards a foreign couple called on the same minister, taking with them a quantity of soap. The minister said he did not care to take the soap for his fee, and indicated that, anyway, there was not enough of it to offset the fee. The bride spoke up: "Marry us, anyway, as far as the soap will go."

Father Roddick was not the only minister in the Brandon region who left the pulpit for the plough. The first Presbyterian minister in Brandon was Mr. Ferris. His successor had been in India. He was the Rev. James Moffat Douglas and came to Brandon after resigning a chaplaincy of Her Majesty's troops at Mhow in India, whither he had gone after being pastor at Uxbridge and Cobourg in Ontario.

From Brandon Dr. Douglas went to Moosomin and in 1896 retired from the ministry to take up farming at Tantallon.

In that same year he was elected Member of Parliament by the Patrons of Industry. He was Chairman of the Standing Committee of Agriculture, and became a Senator in 1906, and so had a chance personally to implement a resolution which he moved and of which he was rather proud, advising a fuller and freer discussion of public questions in the Senate.

Mr. Douglas, like Dr. Gordon, (Ralph Connor the novelist) ex-moderator of the Presbyterian church, and other preachers one has known, was very fond of a fast horse. While he was minister here, he was asked whether it was right for a minister of the gospel to be driving a race hose. He said he would prefer going fast behind a race

horse to thinking swear words all the time behind a slow one.

It is rather a remarkable fact that very few ministers with lines in their hands like to be passed on the road. I suspect they are of the same temper at the steering wheel. Years ago, when livery horses were ordered for funeral purposes, the fastest horse was generally asked for, as it was understood that, as soon as the obsequies were completed, and there being no narrow track to keep on the way back to the prairie town, there would be a horse race for your life. As the minister used to occupy the first place in the funeral procession, he sometimes declined to be a mere passing spectator of this rivalry, which was one of those reactions from grief which invariably happen after funerals.

As a rule the people who came into the West were in the prime of life, hopeful, and healthy. There was little sickness, and death seldom called. Livery men were not so well prepared for funerals as they were to deliver families of settlers to their new homes, of to enable landseekers, speculators and adventurers of all classes to spy out the land.

Weddings usually meant any kind of team as long as they covered the ground, and reached the bride's home in good time. Matched teams were rare, even for important occasions. It was not uncommon to hitch a horse and ox together. Occasionally you saw a cow-and-ox team. Some preferred that kind of dual purpose combination. The gentleman who could afford a matched team of drivers was looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion, as being too rich.

Having just traded for a new horse, and being asked to attend a funeral, to convey the remains of a friend of the gentleman making the request, I had no hesitation in trying to oblige him.

The day was extremely cold. I arrived at the home of the departed with a team that had never been together, and a sleigh with a wagon box on it. Many friends had gathered to pay their last respects, for in those days everyone would leave his business for a funeral. The house being only a shell, those outside could hear the service proceeding inside.

From the effects of the cold wind I could see the hair rising on the horses' backs. One of them being new to me, I realized it would give me trouble; so I circled them around on the prairie, with a view to reducing the perils of impatience.

When the mourners were singing "Jesus Lover of my Soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly," I could see by the strange horse's eye, the way he moved his ears, twitched his mouth, shook his head and pawed the snow, that he would like to fly somewhere. I felt, too, that, as a graduate in the undertaking profession, I must give satisfaction in every way, and was extremely anxious that the horses would do the same. But they cared nothing for me or anyone else.

I had seen mothers, just when they wanted their babies to look their best, worried because that was the time they behaved the worst; and I was as unhappy as they. To slacken the lines was not safe; to hold them tight might make the horses rear and fall back on me. To drive around the block was too far. The mourners might appear in my absence, and there could be no funeral without us. After talking kindly to the team and hoping for the best and hearing the last hymn: "Shall we gather at the river," it occurred to me to drop the lines and hold the restless one by the head. My anxiety increased as the door opened and the pall bearers with the body appeared. I held my breath, not to keep it from freezing, but for fear that the horses would make a jump with the coffin was being laid in the sleigh box.

As the mourners were clambering into the different rigs assigned to them, it was clear that my horses were anxious to lead the procession, the officiating minister's place. In about two jumps they were fully abreast of the preacher's horse which, by this time, was on the trot. The preacher looked at me reproachfully. I looked around to see if the coffin were still in the sleigh. All was well, but there was no holding my steeds to a suitable pace. They wanted to give a post-interment speed to a pre-interment need.

On Rosser Avenue we were still going at a good pace. The preacher did not want to be beaten – few preachers do. It was neck and neck for about two blocks. To pull up my horses to a stop would not do, as the mourners might run into me. Rather than race up Rosser Avenue with a corpse against a preacher, I thought it better to turn south, and up-hill. As I did so and looked back, the balance of the funeral were following the preacher, so that, in less time than it takes to tell, I was conducting the dead up Fifth at a 2.40 clip.

My next thought was: Will the preacher miss me? It would be an assurance most dear if he would only look back, for if he did he would certainly turn up Sixth Street, and if he did not he might continue along Rosser Avenue. Then the idea came to turn into the stable and change horses. This was rejected, as unsuited to the inevitability of the occasion. By careful but firm handling of the reins, and talking to the horses, they cooled down to a more reasonable pace; and I met the preacher, who had sensed the situation, at the corner of Sixth and Princess Avenue, and the feeling that only grace could restore settled upon us as we reached the cemetery at an appropriate gait. As soon as my service was ended I judged it wise to leave the minister to conclude his.

It was an experience about which one did not ask for comment from the other processionists, being humbly

thankful that the lesson against taking strange horses into strange company was learned without disaster. In fulness of time, though, the impression made on one mourner reached me.

Thirty years afterwards, as I entered a home on Seventh Street, the lady of the house reminded me of the baulky house at the funeral, at which her late husband was present. When he came home he was hilarious and as she wanted to know what he was laughing at, he replied: "If you had been there you would have laughed too," and gave her a vivid account of the race, with Death in the chariot and the bereaved in the rear.

Chapter XVII
THE HORSE TRADER

A high compliment was paid a young prairie farmer when it was said that he could take care of himself in a fight or a horse trade. From which it may be adduced that, as the Psalmist said, the horse is a vain thing for safety – especially if you want to buy or sell the brute. One may be prejudiced when he says that the three vocations in which men render most unpaid service to their fellows are medicine, journalism and horse selling. As to the third, many will be more sympathetic towards a story that Wess Speers told to a political meeting.

A noble couple pinched and saved to send their son to a college to train for the ministry. After two years' study, the prospective divine abandoned the enterprise for another. His distressed father was telling a friend of this sore disappointment. The friend asked what line John was going to take up.

"He says he is going into the horse business," was the gloomy reply.

"That's all right," said the friend, "I guess he'll bring a lot more people to repentance that way."

In the earliest days of prairie settlement, the ox was the chief beast of burden, especially for settlers who took, at its face value, the Dominion Government literature, which said that $750 would easily establish a family on a homestead and carry them until the tickled soil had laughed with its first harvest. Forty-five years ago oxen were still freely used in Ontario, which almost entirely supplied the prairie

market. When Trotter and Trotter began business, there was almost as much trading in oxen as in horses. That was the case with every livery stableman, who bought and sold, as well as hired out drivers and teams.

It is a curious aspect of what was really a big trade in trail and plough power, that nobody advertised himself as an ox-trader. The ox was the infantry, the foot soldier of a campaign against the emptiness of the plains. Everybody used him, nobody praised him, though he was patient under affliction, constant in toil and frugal in his diet. It will not be long before oxen will be as scarce on the road and in the field as motor cars were twenty-five years ago. The changes we have seen in oxen's use will be among the forgotten curiosities of the conquest of the Great West.

For logging in Ontario, the heavy yoke, with its U-shaped bows, which held the heavy piece of timber on their necks, was an ideal contrivance, because, with the logging chain between the oxen, there were no whiffletrees to impede movement among the brush. But for more open locomotion; and, especially on the plains, collars and chain traces superseded the yoke, and in the wagons a strap around each neck carried the neck yoke and the front of the tongue, and steered the vehicle.

Very few men whose knowledge of oxen was gained in the West ever saw a yoke of shod cattle. It is customary to shoe them in Nova Scotia where they survive, after having become extinct in Old Ontario, and where German gear is used – a pole strapped so tightly to the horns that the poor beasts can only move their heads in that perfect, though seemingly painful unison which suggests two souls with but a single thought.

As a characteristic of prairie evolution a friend tells me that forty years ago, between Whitewood and Broadview, where he settled, not a team of horses was owned; and that

the oxen he bought cost him $130, which he would have known was more than they were worth if he had been aware that cattle grow a ring on each horn every year after their second. One grieves to say that in places where oxen were marketed, the device was not unknown of filing down the horn so that the price might be exalted.

The horned-team phase of agriculture was bound to pass with the growth of settlement, and the abundant production of oats, without which it is a folly to attempt to keep horses working steadily on the land. Perhaps the lack of honor to the ox in the printed word of those who dealt in him was doe to the knowledge that the steer would soon be reversed entirely for the table, and that the harness and the trail would know him no more.

The swifter, more costly, more stately animal attracted commerce to himself and developed a higher order of business and a wider range of experience than could be derived from the excellent but slow son of the cow. The livery stable was a school in horse sense, a graduator in the study of human nature, and, it can modestly be said, and academy for statesmanship.

The Hon. Tobias Crawford Norris, who was Premier of Manitoba for several honorable years, has never been reluctant to acknowledge the value of what he learned when he ran his own livery stable at Griswold. Colonel Donaldson, who represented Prince Albert at Ottawa for several years, was a liveryman. To show that the facilitation of locomotion is one of the worthiest callings for men who have been high in the service of the state, one ventures to mention that Sir Rodmond Roblin entered the garage business after he ceased to advise His Majesty's representative at Winnipeg.

The service rendered by the man who kept horses for hire, the insistence with which that business taught him

how to judge human nature, and the risks he took in serving the community, became very clear once his calling was inspected. It seems necessary to speak of these things in the past tense because, perhaps before we know where we are, the motor car will have completely driven the buggy off the road, and fastidious people will insist that winter roads be kept in first-class shape for balloon and chain.

To rent a horse to a banker or a mortgage company manager who wanted to look over a farm, in connection with which he was asked for a loan or a line of credit, was a simple and safe piece of business. But all sorts of people hired horses – land-seekers, commercial travellers, young fellows about town. It was no small thing to hand over a $300 driver to somebody you never saw before, who might never come back, who might smash your vehicle, or ruin your animal before he had driven a mile away. We lent many a horse and buggy to men we did not see for weeks.

Being in the horse business increases your confidence in some brands of human nature and weakens it in others. On the whole, confidence wins even when you look down a list of debts owing you which have been on the page so long as to have become almost hopelessly bad.

Horse traders surely are like poets – they are born and not made. They are more necessary than poets. Quite a few horse traders I have known might, I think, have become poets, but it would be very surprising if anyone expressed the belief that any poets could have become horse traders.

Nobody in the West ever had a keener trading instinct than J.E. Smith, who ran a large sale barn at the corner of Fifth and Princess, and whose name is perpetuated on the block on the north side of Rosser Avenue between Eighth and Ninth. He brought horses to Winnipeg in July 1881, sold most of them in the city, traded and sold across country to Rapid City. In Brandon he was always ready to

make an offer for any animal that was before him. It was a comfort to small trader to know that, if they got stuck with some hard-to-be-sold creature, J.E. would buy it at a price.

Though he insisted on terms being kept, he assisted many a man to get on his feet, by giving him credit and carrying him along, if times were hard or circumstances were difficult. It was a dead day with him on which he did not trade something. I don't think he had an invariable rule of getting something to boot in a trade, but he had a wonderful faculty of buying cheap and selling not so. One day he met Jake MacGregor on horseback by the bridge.

"How much do you want for that horse," he said.

"Sixty-five" said Jake.

"I'll give you seventeen fifty" said J.E.

"It's an awful come-down," said Jake, "but I'll take it," and came down from the horse at once.

If you run a livery stable and farmers from the country bring their teams for feed and shelter during a period when they are travelling so far to town that they stay overnight, you get into business of supplying horses to the countryside almost without knowing it – that is, if you have a certain trading aptitude, and are not merely a dispenser of feed and water and straw.

In the early eighties people were coming into the West very rapidly. Only a small proportion of them were Ontario farmers who brought their own stock and implements and household goods in carloads. Until the end of 1885 the only way you could bring a car load of belongings from Ontario to Winnipeg was by way of Chicago and St. Paul. The railway between North Bay and Port Arthur was opened to connect with the line form the head of the lakes to Winnipeg over which the first steamer load of traffic from Collingwood passed, in the spring of

1883. Even with these disadvantages, most of the horses which were sold in the West were from Ontario; and it was in the old province that one gained his initial experience of buying horses and shipping them to the prairies.

In forty years there have been so many fluctuations in the supply of and demand for horses throughout the West, and so little has been told about the processes of this vital feature of the building up of a new country, that one ventures to say more than he intended about the antecedents of scores of thousands of valued helpers on prairie farms. After all, to have had a hand in growing a thousand horses where no horses grew before is some contribution to the development of a new country. Conservatively speaking, our firm has paid three million dollars for horses we brought to the West.

Except an Anglican clergyman who was asked at Liverpool if he had in his baggage any tobacco, wines or other contraband waters and who said indignantly, "I am a clergyman of the Church of England," one has never met anybody who thinks a little personal smuggling is really sinful. On the same principle, no doubt, most people who have horses to sell prefer to leave to the prospective customer a maximum rather than a minimum of responsibility for discerning all the characteristics of the animal his is inspecting. Looking back over many years, therefore, one has only the kindliest feelings to those whose hopes of most profitable sale one has sometimes, in sheer self-defence, been compelled to dash.

In some parts of Ontario one drove into the country, calling on farmers to inquire if they had horses for sale. The outstanding general impression remaining from that kind of activity is of the great change in the countenance of whoever received you, whether it was the farmer or his good wife, when it was learned that,

instead of wanting to sell something, as was feared, you wished to buy.

For a while it was customary, when looking for car loads in dear Old Ontario to put out bills in a district saying that horses for Manitoba would be bought on a given day at a given place. "Distant fields look green" and so, apparently, do people from a distance. When it was noticed that horses for Manitoba were required, the blind, the lame, the halt, the superannuated – everything was likely to be brought, except animals in the flower of their age, well suited to withstand the change to a more rigorous climate.

Very little experience of this kind taught the youngest of us to give no unnecessary information in bills he showed on the concession lines. If one merely asked for horses, without saying whence he came, or whither they would go, he was an object of more respectful curiosity than when he announced he came from the land where, even in Ontario, it was widely supposed that, annually, there were nine months of winter and three of cold weather.

An Ontario man who knew only his native sections of the province might naturally suppose that his part of the whole was the whole of Ontario. It was, therefore, considerable of a discovery to me when it was plain that, on the whole, the horses in eastern Ontario were inferior to those in the western section of the province. Around Stratford, for instance, owing to the heavy nature of the land, the horses were the biggest and best of any in the province, and showed more effectively the effects of high-class importations.

Incidentally, one may say that the first Clydesdale stallion was imported to Canada in 1842 by Mr. Ward, of Markham township, who died shortly afterwards. The horse was then owned and managed for several years by his widow. Seventeen of his sons were prominent prize

winners at the Provincial Exhibitions which, beginning in 1846 were held rotationally at Toronto and several other cities. Even before Ontario horses were in demand in Western Canada, there was heavy exportation form Ontario to the United States. Much of the rich land in Iowa was broken by Ontario-bred horses. I found splendid fire brigade horses in St. Paul that were brought in from Ontario. Ontario has also, for several generations, been a supplier of horses to Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. To a large extent, Quebec has been Ontario's "steady" in this department of agriculture and lumbering.

The heaviest buyers in the only remaining big repository in Toronto are from Quebec. They are shrewder than a Quebec buyer I met in Seaforth many years ago, who for some reason failed to please the Scotch-Canadians who chiefly abound in that district. It was always my policy to be on the best possible terms with competitors. It was a pleasure to render some little service to the Canadien who, perhaps, had an unnecessarily high appreciation of the facility with which a westerner could obtain horses where he seemed to find none. As we stood in the hotel door, an ill-assorted team I had just bought from a farmer, drove by – the mare was a little old, and the colt was rather young to be suitably harnessed together. I told my French friend I had bought them. He said, "How much?"

I replied "Seventy-five dollars."

He asked, "Which one?"

Buying horses is buying horses still, but one phase of the traffic as we carried it on can never be repeated in Canada. The Canadian Pacific was very much of a pioneer railway when first its trains skirted Lake Superior. The engines burnt wood, although their fire boxes had been built for coal. There was much more population along the railway then than now, partly because of the necessity of

piling wood anywhere and everywhere along the track, so that the engineer in distress could be kept going by a fresh supply of cordwood at almost any spot along the route.

It is less than six hundred and fifty miles from North Bay to Port Arthur, which was the headquarters of the C.P.R. at the head of the lakes, until Van Horne, quarreling with the Town Council about taxes, said he would make grass grow in its streets, and moved the whole of the trans-shipping works to Fort William. But I have been two weeks covering that distance with a car of horses. The worst time of all was during the General Election of mid-winter 1886-87. If some of the excellent people who mourn for the good old days could know how much drinking and other demoralization accompanied elections in our youth, they might revise their ideas as to these latter being worse than the former times. The drinking that went on then would be intolerable now. No railway, even a pioneer line, would expect its patrons to suffer the inconveniences which were inflicted upon shippers of live stock in those far-off times. This casts no reflection upon the railways. They did their best, as pioneers invariably do, with the funds at their command.

The men in charge of horses were treated as colleagues by conductors and brakemen in the caboose, and, generally, everybody made the best of almost impossible conditions. We often got out to help load wood on the tender, sometimes to make speed, and sometimes to keep the boiler alive and to prevent the train being stalled. On the whole, we got through a long period of trying and dangerous shipment with less loss than might have been expected.

Forty years ago, as today, it was creditable to the Canadian Pacific that shippers who had suffered inconvenience were treated fairly, even generously. The

last time I went east I looked out for a curve near the shore between Schreiber and Jackfish Bay. It is a big fill now. It was a rickety trestle then, with the rails eighty feet above the stream it crossed.

One bitterly cold night, our part of the train was left on that swaying trestle. We stayed there so long that as a consequence, we came into Winnipeg minus two horses, and plus damages to several others. The resultant claim necessitated a visit to Mr. Whyte, afterwards Sir William, in his Winnipeg office. I can see him now, after I had reinforced what had been said in correspondence, pacing his floor for a minute or two before he turned and said.

"I'll tell you what we'll do. We will pay you $400. compensation for your loss."

That seemed quite fair. I accepted instantly; and that was how one usually did business with the C.P.R.

Our experience as shippers with the railway company is surely not singular. One could tell of cases in which claims have been made for damages, offers refused, the claim taken to court, and the verdict given for the railway. Human nature being human nature, railways and horse dealers often receive somewhat similar warnings from their clients against accepting too readily clients' valuations of live stock.

The horse dealer comes to know very well the man who has bought a team on credit and is slow in honoring his notes. He does not know when time ends and eternity begins, and is apt to be very depreciative of the team he has bought. The railway company, on whose unfenced track straying cattle have been killed sometimes gets new ideas of the uncommon worth of common kine. Sir William Whyte used to say that nothing improved stock like crossing them with a C.P.R. engine.

Chapter XVIII
IN IOWA AND MONTANA

The period of importing horses to Iowa from Ontario gave place to a time when they were exported from Iowa to Western Canada – a sort of advance guard of the Iowa farmers who flocked to our prairies during the first decade of this century. We brought horses to Manitoba and the West from that state during several years. At Grundy Centre, I bought excellent animals at an average cost of $62.50 each.

There was a good deal of Teutonic settlement about Grundy Centre, in which the horses were good, and many of their owners extremely thrifty. After much dickering, I offered terms for a team at one German farm, which the father and son, who were both negotiating, were willing to take, except a stipulation that they should give me dinner, for I was very hungry.

Finally the son said, "Ve vill gif you your dinner here, if you gif us our ven ve bring the horses to the train." In cash value a meal is neither here nor there, but when somebody wants to trade one dinner for two, it is a sin against equity to humor him. I went down the road to a farm where it was hard work to get them to take fifty cents for a dandy lunch.

On Waterloo market, Iowa, one saw an encounter which produced its own philosophy. Two men were about sold out when, having one horse each, they agreed to put them together and make a team and finish the day's business. The deal they felt sure of came to nothing. Each blamed

the other's horse for the failure. One word brought on another, and the larger man said he could lick any damned man in the state. Immediately the other man, who was very much shorter in stature, hit him on the jaw and knocked him down. The big fellow arose and said,

"I beg your pardon. I took in too much territory."

The fuss around these quarrelling associates had scarcely died down when a stranger took me aside, produced a Perchereon stallion and said, "Maybe you could use this, if you could find a horse of the same description."

The horse corresponding to the pedigree was dead, and the suggestion was, if one could be found that had the same appearance, but was not registered, it could fit the pedigree and in a far country no one would be any the wiser. The stranger did not seem to think there was anything criminal in his proposition.

Another Iowa acquaintance cheerfully admitted that he was an expert in that sort of thing; and was prosecuted for selling horses with questionable pedigrees. Asked by the judge if the certificates were right, he said, "Yes, they are."

Further questioned as to how he knew they were right, he replied, "I know they are, for I made them myself."

It was a local jury, the defendant was one of the most popular men in town, and he was acquitted.

Down there one saw, as everywhere else, the good as well as the bad sides to horse trading. One man who sold a team that was to weigh so much, on being delivered, brought them in. Before they were to be weighed, he offered them water, which they refused. They were short of weight and he volunteered to accept ten dollars less than the agreed price.

Buying horses in Montana was a much more colorful business than picking them up in Ontario or Iowa, and

brought one much nearer to a life that is more truly shewn in movies than observers of the screen might suppose. Montana is a country of extremes. Its population as I came to know it, abounded in the finest and was sprinkled with the fiercest citizens of the Republic. It has the widest, wildest, barest ranches. It contains the richest mines. Its climate has greater variations than anything Manitoba knows, or than has been experienced by Medicine Hat where the Yankees presume all bad weather is born.

My purchasing base was usually at Glendive, three hundred miles south of Regina, on the Yellowstone River, which there flows northwestward to the Missouri. The thermometer at Glendive has been up to 117 in the shade. On the road to one of the ranches I used to visit, it has been down to 62 below zero.

A young purchaser, raised on a quiet Ontario farm and accustomed to the Sunday excellences of a Manitoba town, who found himself with money to spend and possibly losses to make anywhere in the Glendive country sometimes felt as if he was being sent up to 117, and feared occasionally he might drop to 62 below.

One day, after buying fifty head, averaging 1,600 pounds each, with colts thrown in, for thirty-five dollars each, and knowing they were in a corral on the open plain, from which they might get out, and perhaps never to be seen again, it was rather an anxious stranger, who, as darkness fell, was homesick among a bunch of cattlemen, everyone of whom carried a pistol in his pocket. He was alone in a bare, square room with an old rusty stove standing in the middle, the floor splattered with water that had leaked through the sagging clay roof that was held up by a post here and there; a wooden bench, a home-made bedstead, an old-fashioned trunk covered by a bootjack; and alarm clock, a pair of spurs, and riding boots; with guns on the

wall for ornamental furniture, mosquito netting over the broken window and cockroaches scurrying across the floor.

Feeling pretty blue, he sat on the bed that was covered with gray blankets and grayer pillows, and began to get his white nightgown from his grip, wondering which of the wild-eyed westerners on the other side of the partition, who were swearing as if by rote, was going to sleep with him. The door opened, a big man with a white wide-brimmed hat put his head in at the door, took off his hat to shake the lightning bugs from it, and said:

"Waal, young feller, you bought some horses?"

"Yes."

"Waal, they're good horses, but purty wild."

The young buyer in his mind's eye, saw them leaping over the corral, and disappearing into the gathering gloom.

"How wild are they," he asked, weakly.

"Waal," the visitor said with marvelous emphasis, "if a man a mile and a half down the trail was to say 'Here they come,' before he got it out of his mouth a man a mile and a half on the other side of town would be saying 'There they go.' Two-three days ago," he went on, "my son was wanting to ride one of them horses you bought. I told him it would throw him so high that the birds would build nests in his pants as he was coming down."

These testimonies belong to the terror which walketh in darkness. It never pays to think gloomy thoughts as the sun is going down. That fifty head came to Brandon all right, brought profit to us, and satisfaction to their buyers. One pair that were in foal were bought by Lon Hamilton who sold their colts at maturity for $740. He made thousands of dollars in prizes and from the sale of their produce; and always had time to say "Here they come" and "There they go."

Unnecessary fear was also an ingredient in another experience which was in some respects typical of Montana, and in others a little unusual at such a time. One of my competitors was Ike Watson of Winnipeg. He was one of the cleverest operators in the West – a tall, fair, bony man; a fearless rider and roper; kind-hearted, but with a weakness for gambling and liquor, and an eagerness to be in the midst of a fight which he enjoyed, regardless of how many scars it might leave on his face.

We arrived at Glendive together. Our credit at the bank was about equal, but he was a giant in build and physical strength, much more experienced, and very much cleverer than I; and I was afraid he would arrive first at McEwan's ranch in the Bad Lands, eighty miles over the Missouri Divide, and beat me at getting the excellent horses I knew were there.

The Bad Lands are worth seeing. It is said that thousands of years ago there must have been an immense outcropping of coal which, being burnt, left mountains of all sorts of colored stone, and rough steeples and cathedral-shaped hills. I was out of Glendive very early in the morning, anxious lest Ike had stolen away in the night, but still enjoying the drive through miles and miles of pure air, as the shoeless horse flew along, and the grouse, breaking cover by the trail sailed off to the distant bluff.

It was a long drive. Towards nightfall, the horses began to lag and one feared that darkness might settle down before he could get to a certain gap in the hills through which the McEwan ranch must be approached and he would have to stay under the stars for the night. The gap was reached, and the horses were steered around the rough road which hung on to the rock over a precipice where a certain false step would have meant certain death for us all.

In waning daylight I descended McEwan's ravine. He was a bachelor who had more horses than he could count. He had never cut hay, built a stable, or spent any money for home comforts. He lived in a little shack alongside his corrals. In the dusk I saw him standing on the opposite hillside by a corral in which there were about one hundred splendid, fat, gray, bay, black and roan horses.

The corral was made of small withs – green willow sticks twisted basket-like along the stakes, making a fence which enhanced the appearance of the horses. By the shack was a pile of saddles and bridles which seemed to say that Ike had arrived first, and had made a deal, and was waiting for supper, with his men inside.

McEwan saw me, and walked up the hillside to let down the bars and welcome me. While I was furtively looking around, dreading to hear that Ike had landed the horses, which looked like peaches and cream to a hungry boy, I asked McEwan if he wanted to sell the animals in the corral.

"Oh, yes," he said, "that's what I have got them there for, for I expect a man from Canada."

Climbing onto the corral fence, one inquired as unconcernedly as his anxiety would permit, as to the number, ages, breed and tameness of the horses, which were the best I had ever seen.

McEwan answered all questions, and then said: "Now, what will you give me for them?"

I came near to replying "Eighty-five each," but made no offer, saying instead, "These horses are yours. I'd rather you put on the price."

Picking up a piece of bark that had been broken off the trees, McEwan asked for a lead pencil, with which he began to figure. After some time, he handed me the bark without a word, but I could just read in the growing darkness "67.50."

Trying to hide my pleasure at the difference between what I was willing to offer, and he was ready to take, I said, "Well, to make a quick job, you take out six of the ones I object to and I'll take them."

We shook hands; the ninety-four horses were mine, we stabled my team, and went in for supper.

The residence of the owner of these and hundreds of other horses was a kind of three-sided building, for it was cut into the bank. For stove there was a combination of stoves, with the top hole like a half-moon. To steady the tea kettle, it was hung on the end of a poker on a nail in the roof. There was no latch on the door, against which, at bedtime, McEwan rolled a stone. He was about fifty years old, from Iowa, had been through the Civil War, since when he had lived alone in this remote, strange crude habitation.

The fear that Ike had forestalled me was baseless. While I slept at Glendive he gambled, and caroused, and lost his chance.

The next year I went back for another supply of McEwan horses. This time, as I came down the ravine, I saw a brand new house; and, at the door, was met by a lady and her two daughters.

McEwan and I slept next to each other on the floor. In whispers he told me that shortly after I was last there, he broke his arm, and rode the eighty miles to Glendive on horseback, for medical attention, carrying his arm in a gunny sack. Then he went to his old Iowa home; and there met a former sweetheart, of home he had lost track, while he was at the war, and who was now a widow with two daughters. They were married; with this resulting transformation.

If anything happened to him, the hundreds of horses would be theirs, but the change of surroundings was almost more than they could bear. There was no society,

or anything to see except wild horses, of which they were in constant terror. They were impressing on him that there must be a change; and I afterwards learned there was. They abandoned the lonely life on the ranch and moved to another state.

Sometimes it is not easy to realize how greatly life across the border may differ from ours, on what are really the same plains. The land of the free is too often the land of free crime. I did business once in the wake of one of those tragedies of freedom such as the screen occasionally depicts. A Mr. Cavanagh, a wealthy horse rancher, was elected sheriff over his opponent, whose name I think was Hurst. Not long after the election, Mr. Cavanagh rode to his town hose from the ranch; and, on his way down a lane that led to his stable, he was struck with an iron bar, and next morning his corpse was found on the manure pile. After much difficulty detectives proved that Hurst was the murderer and he paid the penalty.

The winding up of the Cavanagh estate took me to the ranch, the accommodation on which gave no indication of the wealth of its late owner. One's generous supper of bread and plum jam was eaten off a packing box for a table, with a soap box for chair. Next morning, for the first time, I witnessed fifteen hundred horses moving in a band. It was a most impressive sight as they came over a distant hill and were all put into a big corral.

The family life of ranch horses is wonderful to behold. It was strikingly visible in that multitude. Each mother took her position with her family of one to five, with perhaps an orphan, whose dam had lost her life in a storm or by a wolf. We do not realize how much the animals know, or what their memories are.

A four-year-old gelding can be compared with a boy of sixteen or eighteen. On the ranch he begins to want a

companion, and will find one or several. If he gets together a small group of mares, he will lead them to water, herd them, care for them, and also for motherless colts. Woe betide any other young horse that poaches upon his affectionate preserves.

Touching the memory of horses, a rancher told me that he found an old leader of his band dead on the range. He took off the bell the horse had worn, and hung it in his house for several years. Intending to use it once more and carrying it to the corral, it tinkled; the horses heard it and whinnied, supposing the old mare had come back.

The movies seem more often to show the shadier than the better side of ranch life. Horses roam a good deal and, after the branding in the fall, they are free to go where they like until the round-up, which takes place after the spring crop of foals has been dropped. Not only do mares and their progeny stay together; but a mare will travel long distances to bring forth in the place where she previously foaled.

Still, there will be strays; and a dishonest rancher, finding a mare and colt away off their own ranch, has been known to shoot the mother, brand the colt for his own, and get away with the crime.

That was the exception in Montana. The rule was, if a rancher found a mother and colt belonging to another ranch, however distant, he would make a temporary iron, brand the colt the same as the mother and turn them loose to find their way home. The mare might return next spring with another colt, and so on for years. Each time the honest rancher would brand the new colt; and might even sell the family and send the money to its owner.

Ranching business was generally done on honor. You might meet a man on the trail, inquire about a pair you had seen ten miles back.

He would say "They are mine."

You would reply, "How much do you want for them?"

A bargain would be made, and the buyer say, "Send them to town next week and I'll put the price to your credit at the bank."

That was all there was to many a deal. The horses were delivered; the money paid; and buyer and seller never met again.

Chapter XIX
DAKOTA, SCOTLAND, FRANCE

It must not be supposed that every experience in the United States was as highly honorable to all parties concerned as word-of-mouth deals out on the trail might suggest. One remembers vividly a time when horses being plentiful and cheap, the railways in the western states would not ship horses unless the freight was paid in advance, because there might be no sale for them at the other end. One lives over again a strange hunt across Dakota for a pair of skippers from the Assiniboine Valley, whose team was not paid for.

Mr. and Mrs. Dangwell, not long married and newly in the country from England, settled east of Currie's Landing, one spring. They were charmed by the crocuses; delighted with the lovely bluffs coming into leaf; and they revelled in the evening perfume of the wolf willows. It was a most delightful change from the bustle of the Strand. They expected a gorgeous time farming, though they had no experience in that kind of hard work; and rather expected to see teams of buffalo harnessed to the plough. By the time they were ready to settle, they had learned that there were no buffaloes. They thought for a while that it would be economical to have a team of a horse and a cow, the cow to furnish the milk and the horse to make speed to town as occasion required.

So they came to Brandon, consulted their clergyman who advised them where to buy a team of horses; and they set out on a purchasing expedition. In convincing good faith they told everyone they dealt with that their money

was coming later from England; so that they were able to buy all they wanted, giving notes where desired.

Storekeepers and others were most obliging and, among other things they purchased a churn, which they thought would be useful for making butter until they procured some cows, of which few were then on sale in the country. They bought from us a very good team of black horses, and left town with their wagon loaded with lumber, cooking utensils, saddles, double-barreled guns, bird cages – all the adjuncts of a refined home and, as they thought, all the requirements of an up-to-date farm. They were confident, when next they came to town for mail, their money would have arrived, and everything be paid for.

But weeks went by and it was reported that Mr. and Mrs. Dangwell had forsaken their farm for the south, with the team and a load of the goods they had bought.

It was on an early evening of late May when I learned that, two weeks previously, Mr. and Mrs. Dangwell had started to join some friends in Dakota. Cooper and Russell, the lawyers who then did business for us, were playing ball out on the prairie, south of Lorne Avenue between Sixth and Eighth Streets. A hurried consultation with them resulted in a decision to give chase to the fleeing pair. Soon, with R.J. Noxon as bailiff and a pair of horses in a buggy, I was heading south, into the darkness. Driving pell mell over creeks and through sloughs, about midnight we pulled up at a farm house where the only place we could sleep in was a draughty granary, with a wooden harrow leaning against the door to keep the cattle out, while the rain beat upon the roof.

The next night we pulled into St. John, having driven eighty miles in twenty-four hours. St. John was a town of many tents, half-breeds, and its share of lawlessness. We found a stable for the horses and slept in their manger.

In the morning we learned that Mr. and Mrs. Dangwell, with the black team, had passed through about ten days before, and had let it be known they were heading for Minnewaukan, then the end of Great Northern steel, and seventy miles southeast. We were told that we would never catch the Dangwells; for the country was not even surveyed by townships; there was practically no people in it and, therefore, no supplies; we were likely to get lost; the horses would play out; and the chase would not be worth the hardship.

Well, we set out, crossing the Turtle Mountains and an Indian reservation. After a few miles out of St. John, we saw no house till towards night, when one appeared on the skyline of a distant hill. Nearing the house, besides the skyline we could see a clothes-line with garments hanging upon it. We knew that were you see a clothes-line, you can depend on finding a woman somewhere nearby.

As we approached, the man of the house came out and was very inquisitive, wanting especially to know if we were looking for land. He said he would like to sell, as the country was getting too thickly settled.

We made Minnewaukan that that night and found Dangwell had stored his furniture in the freight shed and was heading west, in the direction of the Dog Dens, seventy miles further on, to cash the teams and wagon. At Minnewaukan I left Noxon in charge, and enlisted the good offices of the sheriff in holding the furniture. The Dog Dens were named from their being a stopping place for mail carriers who used dog teams in the winter to carry mail from St. Paul to the limits of North Dakota and Montana. It was also told me that the place had become a refuge for outlaws.

The trail between Minnewaukan and the Dog Dens was almost directly west for forty miles to Villard, and

then south. It was not easy to drive over, and darkness found me in the hills, compelled to spend the night under the buggy, while the horses whinnied for food and water. The moon came up, and it seemed that there were hundreds of sheep on the hillside and that surely a shepherd must be close by. Daylight revealed the sheep to be limestones. In a few miles I came to a shack where the owner's wife was the only woman in the country. She told me all the people she had seen for months were the couple I was in search of and Mrs. Dangwell was the first woman she had seen in three years. My horses were very tired; and later in that day were all but played-out when we reached Villard, consisting of a few shacks, two of which were newspaper offices.

All business was stopped while I told my story. It was necessary to search for aids to further travel, which I found in a mule team, and which I hired with the owner, one Hoffman, while I left my own horses at Villard. The teamster knelt in the front of the wagon where, with a long poplar goad, he poked the mules along, while I lay down in the box resting. Limbs of pine trees were stuck in the ground every few miles on the so-called trail to the Dog Dens. Speed was very slow after having good horses. Every time Hoffman was asked where we were now, he would give the mules a hastening poke, so he was asked very frequently.

At the Dog Dens we heard that the fugitives had passed through a short time previously. We pushed on in the direction of Washburn, on the Missouri River, forty miles southwest of the Dog Dens. After crossing miles of plain, in the distance we saw a team and wagon. Catching up with them, the horses were seen to be black, but thin. The man walking beside the wagon, his coat torn down the back – evidently the elusive Mr. Dangwell.

I lay down in the wagon box, covered with blankets, telling Hoffman to hurry past as I made judicious observation. Sure enough, the man was Dangwell; but what was the wise thing to do?

To try to take the team by force might mean the murder of the mule driver and myself. If Dangwell resisted we would have to take him someplace, and his word was as likely to be taken as mine. Not long before, in that district, several men had been hanged to the telegraph poles for horse-stealing. It was decided, therefore, to make all possible speed to Washburn, and try to get local support.

At Washburn I hurried to the Justice of the Peace, who was drunk in his room at the only hotel. After showing him the securities, which in Dakota, of course, were legally worthless, though morally convincing, this Justice of the Peace, without asking where the papers had been drawn up, at once signed a warrant authorizing seizure of the team. Soon afterwards on the street, Mr. and Mrs. Dangwell were astonished indeed to meet me.

Dangwell's appearance was rather formidable, for he was a tall man, had grown a heavy beard, and there was a certain wildness in his eye. I told them I had a man holding their stuff at Minnewaukan; and showed them the warrant for seizing the team.

This cowed Dangwell at once. He asked how much I would take to settle. Clearly, it was a relief to meet me, and have a chance to square the account. Mrs. Dangwell had a very pleasant face, lighted with dark eyes; which seemed to see nothing serious in the situation, for she good humouredly said, "They are a nice team, aren't they?"

I looked closely as one of the horses that had a small piece torn out of the eyelid, to make sure of them, for they had failed almost beyond recognition. Obviously, I must decide quickly to settle the business before a crowd would

gather, and, perhaps, make trouble. So I said I wanted the price of the team, and to be paid for the five days occupied in collecting the amount. Dangwell as quickly assented; Mrs. Dangwell climbed up on what was left of the wagon-load, picked up a satchel, and counted the money. When I had received it, Dangwell gave an account of his own journey, including being stuck in the mud, and we parted the best of friends.

At Villard next day I found my horses well rested; and the newspapers there made a "Continued-in-our-next" story about the chase. Twelve days out from Brandon, Noxon and I were back again, to find that several new houses had been built during our absence, and the owners were living in them.

Horse-trading in Europe is a very different proposition from horse-trading in Canada and the United States. The transatlantic commerce in horseflesh has been almost entirely in pedigreed breeding stock, though there was a time when horses were exported from the middle western states to London for bus traffic. I made several trips to Scotland to buy Clydesdale stallions and mares.

There is as much difference between our and the Scottish methods of handling horses as there was and is between some of the social customs of the two countries. No doubt, there has been a diminution of the devotion to drinking which has, for centuries, distinguished the Old Lands. But there has not been the same rapid advance towards community abstinence over there as we have made over here. In Canada I don't remember ever having seen or heard anything equal to what I saw in Scotland, where one woman asked to be paid with a mouthful of whisky for holding another woman's baby while she drank at the bar.

The dampness of the Scottish climate can be held responsible for much of the old time whisky drinking,

and the accompanying freedom from exhilaration, which seemed to be characteristic of all classes of Scotch consumers of Scotch.

Scotland has made more show of approach to North American standards of community sobriety than other parts of the British Isles, for the Scotch had led the way in after-the-war prohibition campaigns. Dry or wet, Scotland will be Scotland yet, in the love of her children for their native land, even though they leave it sadly and very numerously. Saying goodbye to an old lady in Kirkcudbright; I remarked that if I did not see her again there, I hoped we should meet in a better world.

"Na, na," she replied, earnestly, "I shall never leave Scotland."

Nothing quite like the Scottish Lowlands' business in pedigreed Clydesdales has been developed in the livestock world. One might, perhaps, think the pedigree has been a little overworked as an aid to good stockbreeding, without having a whit less admiration for the skill and characteristically Scottish thoroughness with which Clydesdales have been brought into the foremost rank as general purpose horses over a greater territory than any other.

Leading sellers for export themselves keep anywhere, I should say, from twenty five to fifty stallions; the best of which are retained as Scottish assets in Scotland; for obvious reasons. The tendency through breeders' associations the world over is to develop what may be called show points in show animals. For instance, a horse with a small, fine-looking head is a lovely looker, compared with a big heavy-boned brute, with a big, heavy head. The small head is a more feminine than masculine distinction.

But pedigreed stock is pedigreed stock; and, the longer a pedigree a Clyde has the longer the price, assuming he

is sound in wind and limb, the buyer is likely to pay for him.

It can be said of our Scottish brethren that the proportion of perfectly sound Clydesdales is remarkably high. The distinction is more especially noteworthy alongside conditions that seem to obtain in France, where the faultless horse is less frequently met with than he is farther north.

A distinguishing feature of Scotch practice is the segregation of their choicest animals. At Montgomerys', in Kirkcudbright, for example, each horse had a small separate stable of his own. He received the minutest attention from grooms who knew their business; and were as skilled as their employers in showing his good points. A servant is the servant in the old countries – which is true of horsemen in Scotland as it is of lackeys in London.

Digressing, one may say that his first trip to Europe was with a carload of Ontario horses that were sold for London omnibus use. There was more instruction than profit in the venture; part of which was in the force of illumination about old-world standards that had no relation to the buying and selling of dumb brutes. I took a room in Russell Square – a very good room in a very select house, as I soon found out. Being given to acquiring information about people and things; and not slow to start a conversation where it seems likely that something may be added to one's knowledge of human nature, I began a friendly talk with the milkman in front of this Russell Square boarding house. The landlady sent a maid servant to say that the mistress did not allow her guests to talk to the milkman. To which, being a true Brandonian, I respectfully returned the reply that I would talk to whom I pleased.

To return to Scotland – the men who look after horses for employers know their business, keep their places and hold their tongues. You are a buyer. The sellers treat you

with every courtesy; indeed, with abundant hospitality. If you would wander round the counties, thinking to buy horses as you have been accustomed to buy them in Ontario or Montana, you learn that the difference between the Old and the New World is far more than a difference in name. In Montana you found horses by the hundred in a corral, or met them on the trail, where you knew the owner by the brand. In Scotland you found each horse in his own stable; and his attendant told you nothing.

Scotch horse breeders are extremely expert in making the best of their animals' appearance. There is a vast difference between the look of a stallion that is being worked in a harness to keep him in good muscular condition and the glory of the same animal when he has been sandpapered, sawdusted and oiled for exhibition to a buying world. A sand-papered horse is no invention of an imaginative writer. One has many a time seen the long hair of a Clydesdale sand-papered to enhance its luster. And sawdusting is merely rubbing the coat with sawdust inside and out, as it were, to give the animal which has been brought from the field, an appearance that will help the buyer to visualize the impression he can make with him beyond the seas.

The Scotch put their time chiefly on what they have to sell. The annual fairs, for instance, are furnished with no such buildings as are erected in hundreds of Canadian villages. What is the weather when you want to see a beastie? If fair-ground buildings would change the weather they might be all right. But as the weather is meant to be endured and not to be cured, why endure. Endurance costs less than shelter.

The French are good horsemen also, at least in the districts where the Percheron abounds. A French fair is not always quite as impressive as Rosa Bonheur's most

famous picture would suggest – a cohort of great horses, whose necks all seemed clothed with thunder and whose whole bodies were bursting with the pride of life. I have bought horses at Dantes fair, about seventy miles southeast of Paris. It was held on a Sunday at the cross roads with the horses in the orchard on one corner, the cattle in another, the poultry in a third, and the produce of the soil occupying the fourth, with the amusements and other appurtenances of the great day.

Whether one was at the fair or buying from the farmer on his farm, he soon found hospitality was abundant, with wine galore. At the farm houses, you were brought your food outside. Apparently, the good people thought it would be too great a claim on your condescension to invite you to their unclothed tables, and to sit alongside themselves with their caps on while they ate. When the day's business at the fair was done, everybody went to the evening service in the church – those who had done well to give thanks accordingly, and those who had not done well, presumably, to give thanks because they had not been done more.

French fair finance, as the foreigner sampled it, was like nothing else in one's experience. Banking facilities in small places were nothing in comparison with ours. You dealt with Paris, which was congenial with another remarkable feature of the business. The Government furnished an interpreter and charged nothing for his services. You might doubt whether the horses you bought in Dantes would be the same that came to Glasgow. But there is no ultimate profit in deception, as there certainly is no return of a cheated purchaser.

Paul Chinard, the interpreter, went with me everywhere. His only faults were a faithful thirst; and a tendency to take the Government's time and mine while he would dicker for animals that weren't suitable for Canada. Horses were

bought, on the understanding that they would be delivered to the train on shipping day. There was no exchange of writing – nothing but reliance on national rather than personal reputation.

Enough horses secured, you took your duly accredited paper say from the Bank of Montreal, to the Bank of France, in Paris. The great bank covers several acres of ground. It has an immense rotunda, and runs its own big restaurant. You waited your turn, perhaps for hours; among an extraordinary cosmopolitan crowd of customers. When at last you saw the great official who acts as sort of world-wise high financial diplomat, he asked a few questions, accepted your deposit, requested many specimens of your signature, and away you went to Calais and Dover without a written word from anybody in France to prove that you had bought Percherons.

Somebody, of course, would appear to say that the horses bought wouldn't be the horses delivered; and that nothing was safe with foreigners. But, on the appointed day, Paul loaded the horses; they were duly embarked at Havre, unloaded at Plymouth; received at Glasgow – and the French are a great and trustworthy people.

One sometimes wonders whether importing stallions from Europe was a sufficiently renumerative business for the judgment and risk involved. We used to figure, in a general way, that five hundred dollars' profit on a stallion, over and above expenses, was reasonably good: but see some of the considerations involved.

In the first place, you could not enter this trading arena without a great deal of experience gathered in the university where you had to pay your way, and often enough, the other fellow's way also. Though you insured your shipments against the disasters of the deep, the transference of high-class animals from Europe to America carried dangers

which an ordinary insurance policy would not cover.

You might land your horses safely enough from the ship, but they might have developed ailments on the way or have been so seriously reduced in tone that the voyage could end in vastly more trouble than profit. It is not pleasure to conduct seasick horses across the main. If you do not know enough to starve them before beginning the voyage and to keep them almost starved during the time they are getting their sea legs – and, of course, you must not let them lie down but keep them standing in the stalls, each 28 inches wide, which are nailed up as each horse is stood in his place – you could easily find yourself without any compensation for all the time and care you had taken to improve the strain of Canadian stock.

In the end, I doubt if more than half a dozen of those who have made a business of importing pedigreed horses from Europe have gained very much more than an experience, which it is impossible to pass on to anybody else. One could make a long and depressing list of importers whose story proves how easy it is in dealing with horses to do a great deal more good to your country than to yourself.

Chapter XX
FROM THE HORSEMAN'S OBSERVATORY

This university of experience has a great variety of tuitions, for, as has been said, though horse-traders, like poets, are born and not made, you may be born with the greatest genius imaginable for this vocation, and still you will not become at all efficient in it without receiving many bumps, even as a child undoubtedly born with the capacity for a running jump record and a long-distance marathon, has his falls and bruises when he is learning to walk. Let an amateur go into a horse repository auction sale, at which the prices bid for animals vary out of all apparent proportion to the varying appearances of the offerings, and he will be started on a voyage of inquiry as the endless variety of factors that enter into the differences between a horse that sells for $250. and its apparent equal which fetches only $50.

Many years ago we had in Brandon a man whose ability in judging horses was, I think, unexcelled by any whom I have met in several countries. He was C.L. Wagner, and had bought horses for the Northern Army during the Civil War. He was rather short of stature, with very sharp blue eyes, and could adapt himself at once to any company. He dressed with good taste, was always especially polite to ladies, and sang a tenor song with great eclat. But, like some clever men, he could not resist the temptations of social gladness.

He homesteaded the land that now joins Moore Park. When he set out with his oxen he said he was going to

plough the virgin soil to grow wheat to feed the heathen in a far land. He was especially at home wherever a horse trade was on. His style of examining a horse that had to pass inspection for soundness might be told to the advantage of many young men today.

He would slip up in front of the animal and in a gentlemanly way win goodwill by asking his name, or who owned him. In this way he would get a swing on the temperament of the seller.

He would then step towards the horse, stand square in front of him, at the same time looking him over generally. Then he would take hold of his halter with one hand, and with the other carefully separate his lips, seeing his teeth without exposing them to curious onlookers. If the horse was young, it was just as well to say so. If not, it was better to keep still, especially in a crowd. Next, he closely examined his eyes, separately, and together.

Coming closer, Wagner would run his hand over the crest of the neck to the withers and down the back of his foreleg to the fetlock, feeling for blemishes. Raising the foot he examined its fibre and shape. After dropping the foot, he would run a hand along his back to the kidneys and down to the tail, which he lifted, looking down on the hocks and ankles, and for defects over the rump.

If the animal pleased him, he would step back, humming a tune. Putting his hand up to his face, looking over it he would say to the prospective buyer very quietly what he thought. If the horse was a good one, he sprang off one foot onto the other, snapped his finger and said in a loud voice: "He's a good one." If he disapproved, he gave the prospective buyer a wink and walked away and said nothing.

He visited Ontario, after being in the West for some years, and came back saying he would not take a farm

down there if he had to keep up the fences, pay the taxes and do the road-work. He ended his days at Whitewood, with his son.

Wagner brought his great experience to Brandon. Mine had to be gained there, for when I came from Regina in February 1883, the semi-royal pony, with which Mr. Simpson had hauled water to thirsty citizens of the new capital, was the only horse I had owned.

Literally, one became a horseman by waiting on horses. The stable is your constant school. Almost imperceptibly you become, if not an expert, at least expert enough in judgment to make a living out of your own reliance upon your own judgment. You come to know about horses a great many things that you scarcely know how you know, like a skilled bush traveller.

An old friend of mine, who began exploratory work for the Dominion Government, even before I was stringing telegraph wires to Gull Lake, tells me that in his earlier experience he used to marvel how men, with whom he travelled, and who were prospecting in the bush, after a day of moving in all directions, could know as evening approached, that the camp was in such a direction, and could unhesitatingly, unfailingly reach it. He told himself that, if he ever acquired their ability he would not be like them – unable to describe how the faculty came and how it worked. He would know all about it, so that he could tell all about it.

The time did come when, like other veterans of the wilderness, he could make for camp with the unerring instinct of a carrier pigeon, but after thirty years' experience, he cannot tell what it is that tells him where to go, or why.

After a few preliminary deals, Alec Trotter and I decided we must buy or build a barn, as it was almost impossible, in 1883, to rent one. Without knowing it, we were proceeding

on the principle which governed an acquaintance in Indianapolis, who, after a lifetime of business experience, said that if he were a young man again he would find out where in the world most engines were made, and he would go there and make engines, a little better than anyone else's.

Brandon was, I think, the busiest centre for land settlement Canada has ever had. The town less than two years old, had twenty-three livery barns, with Mike Tebo's as the pioneer of them all, and Kelly's on Ninth Street, the mammoth of them all, from which stages and mails seemed to be departing every hour.

There was a place for sale on Sixth Street, which belonged to Mr. Molesworth, whose wife was the daughter of J.W. Sifton. We were prepared to buy it for $2,500., paying $500. down and the balance in two years. The legal firm of Sifton and Sifton had it in hand. We went to see Clifford, with whom we preferred to do business rather than his elder brother, Arthur. There was something remarkably mature about this young lawyer. Although he was a good mixer and was the same age as I, it seemed as though you were talking to a man twenty years older than yourself.

We soon told him our business. He said Molesworth wanted $3,500, but he would make it $3,250.

"No," we said, "$2,500. is our price."

With characteristic quickness, he immediately turned on his chair and said: "All right, I'll take it," – and afterwards he used to say that Molesworth found fault with him for selling the property so cheaply, without consultation.

On the frontier, many laws and by-laws have been more honored in the breach than in the observance. There was a regulation in Brandon that a livery license could only be granted to applicants with seven complete outfits. It was a foolish regulation. The business of a livery is to render

service. There was no reason in equity why, if you were stuck in the country and could hire a farmer's only team to get to town, you should in town be permitted only to hire a team to get to the farm from somebody who had seven teams.

Anyway, Trotter and Trotter did not have seven complete outfits when the day came for Chief of Police MacMillan to inspect their barn, and, if satisfied, to issue the license. We had good friends, and the Chief, who was a statesman as well as a policeman, convinced himself that Brambridge's surrey, John McCourt's buckboard, and Mrs. Shields' buggy were definitely attached to the Trotters' ambition; and we obtained the license.

Our first livery was to hire out our horse and rig for three dollars a day, Sundays excepted. We were as Sabbatarian as Dew-on-the-mown-grass Roddick. But time and experience mellow many things, including our strict adhesion to the Scottish interpretation of the fourth commandment.

In due time, we yielded to circumstances, as a leading Methodist of Bristol in England did when he found himself travelling with a party from Quebec to Edmonton. This shrewd business man and fine spiritual character had never been in a train on Sunday during his long life. As the itinerary was being arranged in the East, he said that, of course, he could not travel on Sunday, even with his dear companions. He would stay with them until late Saturday night, and then rest somewhere on Sunday.

He was shown a time table, which indicated that he must, therefore leave the comfortable special car somewhere near White River, while his friends proceeded to Port Arthur, where they were to be entertained by a welcoming city, pretty much as he would entertain a friend for the week-end in his own English house. He concluded that Sunday

travelling on transcontinental trains was possibly as much in the providential order as the production of milk on Sunday by cows is; and he has never since repented him of his failure to detrain at White River.

This governing element of service in the horse business ought really to be better understood by a none too discriminating public. There was not only the facilitation of business for men who hurried in from the trains and hurried out to the plain on more or less transient business. The country was being occupied by immigrants, many of them young people of little capital. The conditions in which we started can perhaps be best sensed by recalling the impression that the pioneer aspect of Brandon made on one in 1883.

Most of Brandon city was on the corner of Pacific Avenue and First Street. Tents were being put up daily, and some taken down. Restless landseekers were everywhere. Those who had been fortunate enough to obtain homestead entry were busy getting ready to occupy their estates. They had located as far distant as the Moose Mountain, south of Whitewood, to the west, or Boissevain and Killarney to the southeast, or to the Riding Mountains and Strathclair, north-east and north-west, and from these regions those who had already settled came to Brandon for supplies.

Immigrant trains were arriving from the East, usually about daylight. They reminded one of a badly managed circus. Sometimes only a boy would be in charge of a carload of settlers' effects. He would not know where his father's homestead was, and would have to make the best of a very uncertain outlook until his father appeared. If the boy was from Ontario, he had come by the way of Chicago, for the direct steel road from Ontario to Manitoba was not open until late in 1885.

As often as not, the stuff was badly loaded in the car by inexperienced people who had no idea of the distance to be travelled or the time it would consume. When they heard that you could travel from Toronto to Winnipeg in three days, they were apt not to realize that that was the fastest possible passenger time, across the Great Lakes and through the bush from Port Arthur; a very different rate of speed from that of even special immigrant trains, whereon the family accompanied the live stock, implements and furniture.

The immigrant trains would creep into Brandon with the stock starved and exhausted, and their human passengers weary almost unto death, after perhaps a two weeks' journey without a good meal or a truly comfortable rest. Many of these suffering voyagers, looking back across many years of prosperity, as well as a few years of hardship, say it was a dandy trip which they would not have missed for anything – just one more illustration of how the tribulation of yesterday is the laughter of today.

We used to go along these immigrant trains, looking in upon the different arrangements and hear the newcomers tell of mishaps and hairbreadth escapes on the way. Cows were bellowing, calves were bawling, horses were neighing, roosters were crowing, children were crying, and here and there some piping treble was singing "There's a Land that is Fairer than Day." Father would be breaking ice in the ditch to get washing water. All hands were dried on a grain sack, the supplies of soap and towels having long since been used up.

In some of the cars were old fanning mills, Verity ploughs, spinning wheels – anything, indeed, to secure the cheap rate for settlers' effects. When father and the boys would open the car door, it was almost with the fear and trembling that a green young burglar might feel at cracking

a bank safe. For the unloading, partitions had to be taken down. When the wagons were taken out, they had to be put together and finally, with much careful reloading, the teams having been fed and limbered up, they would start off into the unknown, like Israelites trekking for the Promised Land.

It is impossible even to estimate how many young people Brandon horse-traders supplied with teams on time, and conveyed to their homesteads. It was often done as a part of the day's work. On the whole, the obligations entered into by these young pioneers were nobly and cheerfully met. But many a benign grandmother of today can tell how, when as a newlywed, she was carried to the bare prairie with perhaps a sod house for shelter, her eyes filled and her throat choked with the realization that she was indeed far from a lovely home, and in a silent, desolate land.

One of the outstanding distinctions of prairie pioneer days is, I think, the manner in which the community spirit preceded the community – which is not as much of a paradox as it may sound. How could there be a community of people who, until yesterday had never heard of each other, today found themselves scattered across the illimitable plain, each trying to create a home out of vacancy; and tomorrow might find the new and weird conditions too much for them?

They were as separate as grains of dry sand, with which no water and cement have been mixed; and yet all the essentials of community were there;– the chief of which was the same spirit which brought the neighbors into our uncut grain, the day after my father was buried; and the spirit which has made our city what it is, and has developed a countryside of landowners, whose quality is not excelled in all the world.

That spirit manifested itself in many ways by settlers who were imbued with a reverence for the things of life and death. On J.W. Bertram's farm on the first road east of the Brandon Hills, going south, and on high ground, is a piece of sod, four feet by six in a field, which is never ploughed. Beneath the sod is the body of Mrs. Stormick, whose death was the first in any settlement around Brandon. The widower left the country immediately after her burial, playing his violin on the way to Brandon, it is said, to the tune "The Girl I left behind me."

Somebody said the other day that Ontario was peopled by the very pick of the Old Land people. That is true, on the whole, I think of the prairie country, with the difference that what came here from Hastings and Huron and Bruce were the pick of the fruit of pick of the Old Land, a second generation of pioneers in whom the sturdy virtues were the ruling powers.

The present generation is not inferior to the first cultivators of this fertile soil, but it has not quite the same kind of opportunities for exercising all its qualities in patience, perseverance and poverty. We have speeded up with twenty unique twentieth century appliances. We travel longer distances by motor, but do not have to haul grain so many miles to elevators. Even the sack of wheat is becoming rare; and you do not hear of a bag that has fallen off somebody's wagon being brought to town by somebody else, and restored to the owner. Then the threshing machine spilled its work into a bushel measure that had to be dumped into a man-held sack. Now the wagon box is filled by an elevated stream.

There is no opportunity for our experience with Sam Campbell to be repeated. Sam lived away down on the Souris River, about twenty-five miles from Brandon. He came in and bought a pair of oxen, paid $5 down and said

he would go for the balance right away. We supposed he was making a call down street. As he did not return that day or the next, the inevitable query was placed against the transaction. Forty-eight hours after he had bought the cattle he brought the money, for which he had walked to his shack and back.

Chapter XXI
STRAIGHT, AND NOT QUITE

There is nothing like having a counter and an automatic till for doing a strictly cash business. We horsemen had neither counter nor cash register, and so payment for services was sometimes like hope deferred. Sometimes, too, like bread cast upon the waters, you saw your money again after many days. Dr. Matheson, whose parents settled north of Brandon in 1881, returned from the war to tell me that over there, he accidentally met an English officer, Colonel Morton, who had been in Brandon.

Learning that the doctor was from Brandon, he asked if Trotter and Trotter were there yet and being told that they were, said he owed them a dollar for feed for a team of oxen. This was his story of how a green Englishman had a taste of prairie farming which he relished most after he had had a taste of more serious war.

Morton bought his yoke of cattle and had been down the street to get his outfit – a tent, a little lumber, flour, stove, tarpaper, bacon – all the necessities for a bachelor's own home upon the boundless plain. Never having been to an ox-driving school, knowing nothing of the difference between the near and off sides; and being rather vague about the significances of "Haw" and "Gee," he had got on the right side of his steeds which, of course, was the wrong side. He was not even as expert as a fellow-countryman named Noddings, at Whitewood, who, as he passed through town one afternoon was overheard to say to Buck and Bright "Haw, haw. Oh, I beg your pardon, I mean gee, gee."

Morton did not understand the oxen and they certainly did not understand him, which anyone well understands who has tried to drive an off ox from his off side. Poke and appeal as he might, Morton couldn't make his team go straight; though, without knowing it, he was making them frightfully nervous.

Presently a kindly stranger came to him and said: "You are on the wrong side, although you are on the right side," and gave him a little well-informed tuition. He changed sides immediately.

Then the Salvation Army came along, playing and singing "You are Drifting to Your Doom." The oxen, already upset by the owner who did not know the right left side from the wrong right side, immediately started out to fulfill the Salvationist word, and ran away as hard as they could. The stove pipe fell off; the lumber was strewn across the road; and the fry pan clattered into the dust, and still the oxen proceeded south until, somewhere on the prairie, they came to a stop, and the bewildered Morton did his best to gather up his household goods. He was so ashamed of his first venture as an ox-driver that he waited till after dark before putting the oxen in the barn, and was up ahead of dawn and away before anyone was astir; and forgot to leave money for the accommodation.

A good farmer bought an imported mare and returned after six years to pay for her. Six years make quite a difference and he was scarcely recognized, but the settlement was easy to make. A few days later I took a picture of the mare and her progeny and sent it to North West Farmer. It was the means of selling the produce of the mare for over two thousand dollars. After six years' work and increase, she was still fine and fresh.

Not forgetting thousands of honest deals that have been satisfactory to both sides, the cool courage with

which customers will sometimes take advantage of an innocent dealer is worth noticing. One of the cutest bits of generalship of which I was the victim was performed by a farmer's wife. I was compelled to stay in her house over night. The husband had little to say, and in the morning the wife insisted that I buy the only thing they had – a third horse – with which to raise the money to pay a doctor's bill. Without putting the animal through a Wagnerian examination, I decided that if it would help the good people out, I could not lose very much at the price, and so I bought the horse, which was shipped to Brandon, where I sold it to a lumberman in town.

In a few days he returned it, saying that it was stone blind, though the eyes looked perfectly natural. Shortly afterwards I was in the neighborhood of the people who had the doctor's bill to pay and they happened to be visiting where I was at tea. After supper, the lady asked if I was coming over there, meaning to buy another horse.

"No," I said, "I don't think so. What did you sell me that blind horse for?"

At once and with perfect poise she said, "We didn't know of a better man to get him."

Not so far from there, one time, a farmer offered a horse cheap, and described him, and later brought him to me.

I said, "How old did you say that horse was?" and received reply, "Nine year-old."

"Well," I said, "my daughter is seventeen years old; and I brought that horse to this country from Ontario four years before she was born."

An honest looking old chap came to the barn one day to buy on credit a pair of horses and, being asked where he lived, rattled off his section, township, and range, near Neepawa. He offered to give a chattel mortgage on seventeen head of cattle. While the papers were being drawn up, he described

their color and ages and weight. Some had horns turned out, some had horns turned in, some were almost white, and others almost red. During the conversation, I said to him that some people who bought live stock assumed too much liability and, in trying to cover too much country got into trouble and debt.

"That's perfectly correct," he said, "I've only just got out of a rather bad hole myself."

He did not own a hoof, and had just got out of jail. That old man's son was a chip off the old block, but with a certain candor about him. He came one day, and attempted to put over a deal that really should not have been tried upon a child. I was able to expose him to himself, when he said: "Well, Mr. Trotter, I am much obliged to you. It's really worth coming in here twenty miles to find out I am no good."

Sometime after that his wife disappeared, at the same time as a bachelor neighbor vanished. They were never heard of.

One of the most curious reachings-out of the long arm of coincidence brought a Scottish, a Brandon and a Chicago episode together. The excellent Mrs. Shields, who returned to Scotland from Rounthwaite, there to find that she would rather live scarcely in Brandon than plentifully near Edinburgh, sent us a young man, newly from the Old Land, hoping we would employ him. We gave him a job around the barn, at which he was incompetent, because too fond of liquor. He pawned his clothes, which were redeemed by a friend who later found that the pawn-broker had kept a good overcoat for profit.

The young Scotchman went from bad to worse, and, to save him from going to jail, he was sent to the country, where liquor was very hard to obtain.

A few weeks later, another young man in our employ died and, as administrator of his estate, I had to open his trunk. Among other articles in it were clothes from the Old Land, and a silver watch. It was clear that the dead man had lent the no-account Scotchman money on the clothes and time-piece.

The clothes were laid aside and the watch put in the safe.

Two years later, in Chicago I met a young lady from Scotland. The conversation drifted from one subject to another until the girl told a story of staying at a friend's house, and sleeping in a room on the ground floor, near the open window of which she left her watch. On awakening the watch was gone. She described it, when I said:

"I believe I have that watch at home and will mail it to you."

Sure enough it was the girl's watch that had been pledged by one stable-boy to another.

I don't think we ever saw conscience money in connection with the horse business, but did once receive a pair of conscience whiffletrees. A young fellow came in, threw down a pair of whiffletrees and said: "There, I took these things from you a year ago and the danged things have bothered me every time I have been out to plough."

Neither have I met an exact counterpart of the deacon whole amusing pillory is David Harum. But ministers are frequently quite human.

Mr. Lawson, the first Methodist minister of Brandon needed a horse, but was a little distrustful of his own judgment concerning the animal, and, if one may say it, also a little distrustful of the Methodist from whom he thought to purchase a trusty companion of the trail. He came to the barn, was shown a horse which was suitable for

him. He said he wasn't much of a judge and would come back after a while.

It seemed certain that he would go consult the Rev. Mr. Emsley, who did know something of horses. I 'phoned Mr. Emsley that he might expect a call from Mr. Lawson, who was thinking of buying a horse. Emsley inquired which horse, where he stood in the stable, and said: "Leave brother Lawson to me."

At once he put on his hat and walked down the street. He met Lawson, who told him his business, upon which Emsley said: "What horse is it? Where does he stand in the stable?"

Lawson said he was in the fourth stall on the right.

"Well," said Emsley, "if you don't own that horse by one o'clock, I will."

When I saw Lawson marching to the barn looking neither to the left hand nor the right, but coming straight on, as the manner of men is who have made up their minds, I felt sure the horse was sold.

He was.

One would not like to guess how many car loads of horses have been sold on telegraph orders by distant customers who rely absolutely upon the squareness of horse dealers whom they know. It would be invidious to speak here of satisfied customers; but as we have been referring to the clergy, it may be pardonable to say that, among the varied contents of a desk drawer which has just been opened is the card of an archbishop who has written upon it: "I am very well pleased with the team you sent me."

Possibly there are horse trading philosophies which might be set down with advantage to some who do not wish to be brought to repentance in this world. There are even philosophies connected with show rings which showmen alone are competent to expound. One who has had many

jobs tried upon him as were good for his soul may offer a suggestion to any who are likely to be invited into a horse trade.

If the party of the other part shews special anxiety about possible defects in your animal – say he listens extra carefully to the heart, or feels for signs of spavin – it is as well to pay similar attention to his steed. Human nature is human nature; especially so where horses are likely to change homes. Super-carefulness in language will sometimes be indulged in. I have known a buyer question as to whether the horse was a good one to be answered "He's a roaring good one." Half a mile down the road the deafest pedestrian could say it was true.

One of the finest men in the West is Alec Galbraith, Scotch of Scotch, with oceans of experience in America. He was for years an importer to the United States. He had an import stable at Brandon. He has been superintendent of fairs for Alberta; has run demonstration trains, lectured to farmers and conducted short courses. He tells of his Brandon manager, Jim Smith looking into a freight train as it passed through Brandon and seeing a chestnut stallion that was being taken to Saskatchewan. He recognized the chestnut and told the owner that he had got a good horse; but he didn't look well. The owner was puzzled; and asked Smith to particularize.

"Well," said Jim, "he doesn't look well; in fact he doesn't look at all. I knew him down east. He's stone blind."

Galbraith tells, too of a Scotchman who exhibited a horse at Chicago Winter Fair, where he himself goes as religiously as he does to church. Receiving no prize he blamed the judges, which is not a new exercise. Leading his unrecognized champion home, he was met by a friend who inquired how he had succeeded at the fair.

"Mon" was the reply, "I may tell ye I am indeed verra fortunate to get my beast hame wi' me. I was feared yon terr-r-rible judges wad ha' ta'en my horse from me as weel as the prize."

All the woes of the fair do not belong to this continent, as Galbraith testifies. Near his Caledonian home a farmer, before the live stock show, sent the judge before whom his colt would appear, a ham; receipt of which was not acknowledged. At the fair he received a measley fourth prize, for what he really thought was a superfine colt.

He found the judge, to whom he said:—

"I'm surprised ye dinna give ma colt better than fourth prize. Did ye no receive the ham I sent ye?"

"I did," answered the judge; "and it was a good ham. But the man who got the first prize sent me a whole pig.

Cynicism apart, there is an infinitude of goodwill, and more, in men's relations with the dumb creation. Here is a little piece I wrote twelve years ago in the Brandon Sun:—

"J I M"

About ten years ago, Jim had been admired by hundreds of race horse men, and especially on the morning of the auction sale. It was almost impossible to get near his stable, let alone to see him in his padded stall where he stood with a silk covering and many sweaters and boots and all the paraphernalia of a race horse. He was in the pink of condition, as his owner W. Barwise, of Toronto, would sacrifice anything in the way of his own comfort for the love of a horse.

Standing close by, dressed in a faded suit of clothes, that had seen many years' service, was Jim's owner. His appearance suggested that his whole thoughts and ambitions were devoted to Jim. He looked like a man who had seen better days. He became more anxious and nervous as the

auctioneer's bell began to ring, and the final moment had come when he and Jim must part company.

As he untied the delicate halter, Jim neighed. As he was led out to the sale ring, tears could be seen in Barwise's eyes. In a few moments Jim was knocked down to a new owner for $300, less than one third the amount offered for him previous to his last race. The jockey was supposed to have sold this race.

Fifteen hundred dollars were lost, and in disgust Barwise decided to go out of the race horse business. After the sale he interviewed the new owner and said: "I hope you will be good to Jim. He is very intelligent and has a wonderful memory. No matter what mix-up he gets into just say 'Whoa,' and he will stop. He is very fond of apples. I shall load him for you and fix him up comfortably and put in a pail of apples." This he did and as he tied Jim in the car, Jim neighed again, as he seemed to realize that he was saying farewell to his old owner.

In due time Jim landed at Brandon after one of the hardest experiences of his life. The following Christmas a letter was received by his owner with 25 cents enclosed for apples for Jim. Every Christmas since, Jim's various owners have been in receipt of a letter with 25 cents enclosed, the letter having passed through the hands of all Jim's previous owners. And today I am in receipt of a letter which says "Enclosed please find one dollar for dear old Jim. Please see that he gets the worth of it in apples, and tell the man who owns him to keep him in a nice warm stable, and I will always be pleased to hear from Dear Old Jim."

If you are interested, and would like to see this horse, you will find him in a small stable behind the Galbraith Mission House, Seventh St. Jim will be glad to see you, especially if you bring an apple.
AU REVOIR.

Those who saw what was in this book, before publication, have said it gives the impression of a live, faithful account of the people and conditions whose like we shall not see again in southern Manitoba. I shall try to believe they are not altogether too generous.

Their kind judgment is mentioned now solely because it is obvious that certain of our successors will turn here with the desire to find the sort of light which efforts like this thrown upon former times. To any who so come to these pages, as to those who see them while they are new, one would fain appeal to do whatever in them lies to foster the widest possible appreciation of the noble toil and sacrifice of the pioneers, not merely of the West, but all of our beloved Canada. It is only in that way that we can harrow that the pioneers broke, and reasonably expect God to give the increase. Harrowing is much easier than breaking, as everybody knows who has had his share strike a hidden rock, and the plough handles smite his jaw.

Some of us don't know very much more of Canadian history than that we have heard it frequently said we haven't any. That has always seemed to be the greatest of a great deal of nonsense with which a few of the so-called wise have tried to fool the many so-called ignorant. They used to give us the years when kings ascended the throne, and descended to the grave; the dates and slaughters of battles, which always did more harm than good; the A.D.'s in which political milestones were providentially set up, in violent opposition, usually, to a king who claimed that he was the Simon Pure example of divine right, guidance, and favour.

This kind of history tells mighty little about the people whose labor made and kept the nations alive; and whose patience under tribulation has been the marvel of the human race's advance.

Canada has the richest kind of history of any modern English-speaking country. We who now live have seen in the West the most wonderful unfolding of a human history which connects primitivity with such miracles as the radio. The history of mankind is the story of mankind's progress from barbarism to the commonplace of a child's voice being listened to over millions of times more territory than that in which thunder can be heard.

This book tries to show what sort of people they were who did the things which may have seemed ordinary enough while they were being done; but which will be eagerly read about by descendants who will be given far sounder teaching about history than could ever come from the foolish-wise who vainly imagine that Canada has none and that Canadians are somehow, a second-rate people.

Our chief trouble is that we haven't made enough of ourselves, which means that we began by making too little of our fathers. Mere ancestor worship is nothing, especially when it pictures ancestors, not as they were but as their inferior descendants would like them to have been. The enduring things have been achieved by man and women who were liberally endowed with faults, and were never on parade. Here it has been sought to present people of flesh and blood, without unnecessary dwelling on personal faults, or faithfully depicting isolated conditions that might have been mended by soap and water.

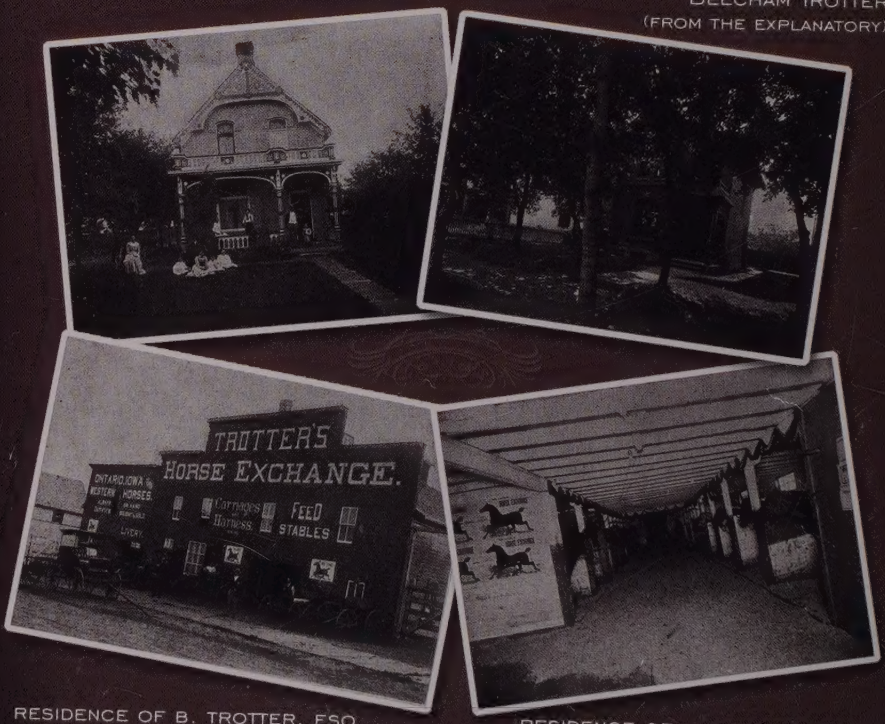
The generation of Western pioneers can afford to stand before its heirs without boast or blush. It was none the worse because it could not phone and did not know how to fly. It took its business seriously always, and its politics sometimes rough. Its religion may have thought more of judgment than of pardon. Its amusements were harder than some present day work. Its young people had less practice in bringing up parents than the young people of

today sometimes appear to enjoy. But, on the whole, that generation was as it is imperfectly delineated here; and it is very reasonable to invite all who inherit the fruit of its sacrifice to be proud of it.

"This doesn't pretend to be a history. I trust it isn't dry enough, as certainly it isn't long enough, for that. It would have been impossible to reproduce a sort of directory of the pioneers in town or out. This book cannot fairly be judged by the difference between those who are in it and those who are not. We haven't aimed to hand out justice, but to tell a human character story, with strict adherence to known facts.

Some people are mentioned here because they were good; and some because they were not quite so good. The good people who ought to be in and are not may have escaped something. A few others may have been luckier than they know. If every reader does not see that Brandon city and country are founded on the character and courage of as fine a people as have created any community in the world, the fault is in the execution, and not in the intention of the task. What is true of Brandonian life is true of all Western Canada, the only fault of whose people is that they don't know how greatly they have wrought."

- Beecham Trotter
(from the explanatory)



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